

Committee on Public Safety
March 23, 2021

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Tuesday, March 23, 2021
9:30 a.m

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR., CHAIR
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILMAN DEREK S. GREEN
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS

ALSO PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB

RESOLUTION: 210090

1 - - -

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good
3 morning, everyone. This is a public
4 hearing of the Committee on Public
5 Safety regarding Resolution No. 210090.

6 Before we start this hearing,
7 I'd like to recognize Samantha Williams,
8 Esquire for an important announcement.
9 Thank you.

10 THE CLERK: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chairman.

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

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

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

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

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

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
23 Ms. Williams.

24 And at this time, I'd like to
25 call the roll to establish a quorum.

1 And will Members make brief remarks so
2 that your image appears on the screen.

3 THE CLERK: Councilmember
4 Thomas.

5 (No response.)

6 THE CLERK: Councilmember
7 Green.

8 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Good
9 morning, Mr. Chair, Ms. Williams. A
10 pleasure to be here for this hearing on
11 this important topic.

12 THE CLERK: Good morning.
13 Councilmember Gauthier.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good
15 morning, Mr. Chair. Good morning,
16 Samantha. Good morning, colleagues and
17 to the public. Present.

18 THE CLERK: Good morning.
19 Councilmember Gym.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
21 morning, Council, to Mr. Chairman. Good
22 morning, colleagues. And good morning
23 to the public.

24 THE CLERK: Councilmember
25 Brooks.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Good
2 morning.

3 THE CLERK: Good morning.
4 Vice-Chairman Johnson.

5 (No response.)

6 THE CLERK: And, Chairman
7 Jones.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Present and
9 good morning to all, including the
10 viewing audience --

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS:
12 Mr. Chairman, I'm sorry. This is
13 Councilmember Thomas. I just want to be
14 marked as present. I apologize to you
15 and the Clerk.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Duly noted,
17 sir. Not a problem.

18 A quorum has been established.
19 This Committee hearing is called to
20 order. Ms. Williams, will you please
21 read the title of the resolution for
22 today.

23 THE CLERK: Resolution
24 No. 210090, authorizing the City Council
25 Committee on Public Safety to hold

1 public hearings to examine more
2 equitable solutions to crime scene
3 cleanup policies that place the
4 logistical and financial burden on the
5 families of homicide victims.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.
7 And before I begin, I'd like to speak to
8 this resolution.

9 During the pandemic, COVID
10 attacks things in your body often that
11 have pre-existing conditions and/or
12 weakened. So whether you have a heart
13 problem, organ problem, high blood
14 pressure problem, it goes right to it
15 and exasperates that problem.

16 COVID did that also for
17 society. It attacks and exposed all
18 kinds of things that before we did not
19 recognize as clearly as we do now. One
20 of those things was that gun shootings,
21 homicides did not take a holiday during
22 COVID, did not seek shelter during the
23 pandemic, but was exasperated and we
24 were able to slow down just enough to
25 see some of the devastating impacts,

1 unattended consequences that come with
2 homicide, and one of them is crime scene
3 cleanups.

4 On your worst day, on the day
5 you may have dreaded and have a
6 nightmare where a parent may have to
7 prematurely deal with funeral
8 arrangements for a child that was taken
9 away due to senseless gun violence, on
10 that day they also are made aware that
11 it is your responsibility to clean that
12 crime scene.

13 When I first heard about it, I
14 had to stop and say, excuse me, would
15 you please repeat that again. And it
16 was just explained to me what that
17 process was like, how many
18 Philadelphians have to deal with that
19 burden and then how expensive cleaning a
20 crime scene can be, how traumatizing,
21 emotionally it is and that there are
22 resources available, but very few people
23 know about it nor think about it during
24 their time of such extreme duress.

25 So what we want to do is make

1 sure that we know what the processes
2 are, we want to know what the resources
3 that are available and finally if
4 there's more we can do by way of support
5 to the victims of gun violence, we want
6 to do that as well.

7 So with that, are there any
8 other members of the Committee that
9 would like to make an opening statement?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Hearing
12 none, Ms. Williams, can you please call
13 the first panel to testify.

14 THE CLERK: The first panel of
15 witnesses to testify will be Natasha
16 Danielá de Lima McGlynn, Sam Margolius
17 and Stephanie Le Clair.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
19 all for your patience. And please state
20 your name for the record and begin your
21 testimony in the order that you were
22 called.

23 MS. MCGLYNN: Good morning. My
24 name is Natasha Danielá de Lima McGlynn
25 and I'm the Interim Executive Director

1 of the Anti-Violence Partnership of
2 Philadelphia or AVP. I'd like to thank
3 you for the opportunity to share our
4 expertise and work with the City
5 Council's Committee on Public Safety in
6 support of Resolution 210090, which is
7 intended to examine more equitable
8 solutions to crime scene cleanup
9 policies and practices that currently
10 place the logistical and financial
11 burden on the families of homicide
12 victims.

13 As advocates for victims of
14 crime, family members and friends of
15 homicide victims and communities
16 impacted by homicide and violence, we
17 very much appreciate the light you're
18 shining on this critical issue. First,
19 let me provide a brief overview of the
20 scope of our work and expertise. AVP is
21 a nonprofit 501(c)(3) victim service
22 agency that was founded nearly 40 years
23 ago. We are one of six victim service
24 agencies in Philadelphia.

25 Our mission is to end the cycle

1 of violence by providing a wide range of
2 intervention, prevention and support
3 services to children, youth and adults
4 traumatized by exposure to violence to
5 help them rebuild their lives in the
6 aftermath of violence. Our dedicated
7 staff of therapists, counselors and
8 victims advocates serve approximately
9 3,000 clients annually.

10 In 2016, AVP was one of seven
11 national organizations awarded a grant
12 from the United States Department of
13 Justice's Office of Victims of Crime to
14 enhance systemic responses to complex
15 homicides. AVP conducted an extensive
16 investigative study exploring the
17 experiences and needs of survivors of
18 intra-familial homicide through
19 interviews with survivors.

20 In addition to the profound
21 trauma interviewers described, many
22 recorded the unexpected ordeal of having
23 to clean up the crime scene. While this
24 experience is not unique to intra-
25 familial acts of violence, this key

1 finding exposed a glaring oversight in
2 existing policies and practices that
3 impact victims and survivors across
4 Philadelphia, specifically current
5 practices direct the Philadelphia Police
6 Department and support personnel to
7 travel to the crime scenes to gather
8 evidence and conduct an investigation
9 but do not address the need for cleaning
10 any biohazardous material left at the
11 scene.

12 Existing literature suggest
13 that proper crime scene cleanup cannot
14 be performed by an average citizen
15 without certification or training.
16 Additionally, there are a number of
17 regulations at the local, state and
18 federal levels when it comes
19 specifically to biohazard cleaning. Yet
20 while these rules and regulations exist
21 to protect us from health risks by
22 exposure to dangerous chemicals, toxins
23 and diseases when it comes to crime
24 scenes, victims and survivors in their
25 state of traumatic shock are typically

1 left to clean up the crime scene
2 themselves without any guidance or
3 assistance from the City.

4 Consequently, victims and
5 survivors clean up the blood and bodily
6 remains of their loved ones at great
7 physical and psychological cost to
8 themselves. There are currently no
9 policies or practices across the City
10 administrative agencies that make crime
11 scene cleanup services accessible and
12 available to families and communities
13 impacted by violence.

14 Recognizing these notable
15 deficiencies, AVP initiated a project to
16 explore crime scene cleanups. Today we
17 released our findings in a report
18 entitled, Blood on Our Hands, addressing
19 crime scene cleanup in the City of
20 Philadelphia. The production of this
21 report was made possible by subsequent
22 development to our intra-familial
23 homicide grant. This report is the
24 first venture of its kind by our agency.
25 It exemplifies our initiative in seeking

1 novel and pragmatic solutions to the
2 problems our clients and the citizens of
3 Philadelphia face as a result of
4 incidents of violence.

5 In identifying the
6 circumstances faced by victims and
7 survivors of homicide in particular, we
8 note the disproportionate impact on
9 Philadelphians who are Black and Latin.
10 Of the 2,167 shootings in 2020, 84
11 percent of victims were Black and 9
12 percent were Latin. The same racial
13 inequity is true for homicide
14 co-victimization. 83 percent of
15 homicides between 2016 and 2020 involve
16 Black victims and 10 percent involve
17 Latin victims. In the status quo, crime
18 scene cleanup is part of a larger system
19 that further marginalizes Black and
20 Latin people and the aftermath of
21 violence and homicide. This
22 marginalization is unjust and emblematic
23 of the systemic racism that communities
24 of color continue to endure.

25 Lastly, our report proposes

1 changes to policies and practices at the
2 City level in support of victims and
3 survivors, ranging from the City
4 assuming the logistical and financial
5 responsibility for the removal of
6 biohazardous materials from crime scenes
7 to providing comprehensive resources to
8 the public that educate and support
9 survivors in the aftermath of homicide.

10 These solutions are intended to be
11 tangible, practical and implementable.

12 It goes without saying that the
13 past year has been difficult for our
14 City. Between the COVID-19 pandemic and
15 the gun violence epidemic, we have been
16 hurting in unprecedented ways. Yet the
17 occurrence of this pandemic has given us
18 an opportunity to come together as a
19 community and explore the disparities
20 and unnecessary hardships that prevent
21 children, families and communities of
22 color from accessing opportunities that
23 create the path to a fulfilling life.

24 Thank you to our clients for
25 trusting us and for courageously being

1 here with us today to share their
2 experiences. This is not an easy matter
3 to discuss. In fact, several clients
4 declined the opportunity to share their
5 experiences with cleaning up crime
6 scenes due to the traumatic nature of
7 recounting such experience. To our
8 clients and those in Philadelphia who
9 have lost someone to violence, we are
10 all here because of you. We are honored
11 and humbled to serve you.

12 Thank you again for holding
13 this hearing, for examining the
14 additional burdens imposed by victims
15 and survivors in the aftermath of their
16 loved one's murder and for allowing AVP
17 to be here today at the table. We stand
18 ready to assist in any way possible to
19 help ensure victims and survivors in
20 Philadelphia are served and supported to
21 the best of our abilities. At AVP, we
22 have a saying here, let the work speak
23 for themselves.

24 On that note, I turn it over to
25 my colleagues Stephanie Le Clair and Sam

1 Margolius.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

3 MR. MARGOLIUS: Thank you,
4 Natasha.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Can you
6 state your name for the record, please.

7 MR. MARGOLIUS: Yeah. My name
8 is Sam Margolius.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.
10 Begin your testimony.

11 MR. MARGOLIUS: Thank you,
12 Natasha. Thank you, Councilman Jones,
13 and everyone who has taken part in all
14 of this work. We want to start by just
15 expressing again our gratitude for the
16 opportunity to share the experiences of
17 survivors who told their stories as part
18 of this research in the hopes of making
19 changes for families of homicide victims
20 in the future.

21 We also want to share, as
22 Natasha just mentioned, that this
23 content is incredibly traumatic and this
24 presentation includes quotations from
25 survivors, graphic imagery and

1 descriptions of the scenes after acts of
2 violence across the City. We invite
3 everyone to please take care of
4 themselves if you are watching at home.
5 If you've experienced violence
6 personally, to please take care of
7 yourselves in whatever you need to.

8 So as we've mentioned, one key
9 finding in this research -- next slide
10 please -- is that families in
11 Philadelphia had the experience of
12 cleaning crime scenes themselves. One
13 family member shared this quote with us
14 and we want to start out by just sharing
15 this, "My family member had to go in
16 there and clean off the walls before I
17 went in so that I didn't see my loved
18 one's blood. So my family member, I
19 told him, I said, I can't go back in
20 there until we do some cleanup. He
21 said, I'll go in. I didn't realize how.
22 We all grew up together. Why would I
23 think that he would be any stronger to
24 do something like that than I would."

25 Next slide. The experiences of

1 survivors of homicide victims and their
2 experience of traumatic grief are well
3 known across the City. Violence has
4 risen to levels not seen in more than a
5 quarter century and the daily acts of
6 shootings and homicides are exposed to
7 everyone across the City. But it's
8 important to know many of the different
9 ways that it impacts families and
10 communities. Psychologically, all of
11 this violence increases people likely to
12 experience PTSD, experience prolonged
13 grief, experience depression, anxiety,
14 substance use disorders. Socially, it
15 has consequences of feelings of
16 isolation, relationship conflict,
17 stigma, shame. Physically, it has
18 influences on the body that last for a
19 long time and can lead to cancer, high
20 blood pressure, heart problems, changes
21 in weight, increases and decreases, and
22 economic challenges including the loss
23 of income from a loved one and an
24 inability to work and to go on
25 disability, if necessary.

1 Institutionally, people
2 experiencing homicide and violence also
3 have ongoing institutional harms, where
4 they continue to experience engagement
5 with the criminal justice system,
6 experience lack of communication
7 sometimes and challenges in
8 communication with law enforcement,
9 experience unsolved cases. And in the
10 case of crime scene cleanup, often have
11 this experience of cleaning crime scenes
12 themselves due to an institutional gap
13 in practice.

14 So families when they return to
15 the scene without any information, often
16 find the bodily remains of their loved
17 ones. This poses physical health risks
18 if they interact with blood and other
19 bodily fluids, and it compounds people's
20 trauma, as Chairman Jones said, on the
21 worst day of their life, to be
22 interacting with their loved one's
23 remains in this way.

24 Next slide, please. Stephanie.
25 Stephanie, can you --

1 MS. Le CLAIR: Sorry. I can't
2 unmute and present at the same time
3 apparently. So in terms of the process,
4 and Natasha mentioned this a little bit,
5 so essentially once there is a homicide,
6 the law enforcement and crime scene
7 technicians go to the scene and collect
8 evidence and ask questions of the
9 witnesses, and then later the deceased
10 is taken to the medical examiner's
11 office and the crime scene is left
12 behind with blood and bodily remains
13 left behind. And at some point in this
14 process, the survivors are notified,
15 which is the first level of trauma.

16 So once the crime scene
17 technician and the police department
18 leaves the crime scene, again leaving
19 all the bodily fluids and remains
20 behind, the survivors then return to the
21 scene. Often they are not notified of
22 what's awaiting them in the crime scene,
23 and that's another level of trauma when
24 they come in and see the blood of their
25 loved one everywhere. Now, in the

1 fourth step, as we mentioned most of the
2 survivors clean the crime scenes
3 themselves. There is another process
4 that they could go through which is hire
5 a professional cleanup company for
6 \$2,000 to \$20,000, which we are going to
7 talk about more why there are barriers
8 to this.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Let me stop
10 you. Repeat that price.

11 MS. Le CLAIR: And we're going
12 to go over it again. It's \$2,000 to
13 \$20,000.

14 So either way, whether they go
15 through a professional company or they
16 clean the crime scenes themselves, there
17 are different levels of trauma that
18 we'll talk about. And then we're going
19 to go through the barriers for why
20 survivors do not end up hiring
21 professional cleanup services and end up
22 cleaning up the crime scene themselves.

23 So who does this impact, and
24 Natasha mentioned this. If we look at
25 the victims of homicides for the last

1 five years, so 2016 to 2020, 93 percent
2 of the homicide victims were either
3 Black or Hispanic victims, and that's
4 true regardless of what part of the City
5 we're looking at. If we look at a
6 specific zip code and we look at the
7 demographics of the area, Black and
8 Hispanic victims are disproportionately
9 impacted by homicide even in specific
10 regions of Philadelphia.

11 Now, if we look at this figure,
12 we also have -- we can also see that the
13 dark orange areas are where we have the
14 90 or more homicides in that last five
15 years. And if we look at the poverty
16 rates, those lighter areas right here
17 are where we have -- like the lightest
18 two blue areas where we have high
19 poverty -- sorry, the darker areas are
20 where we have high poverty rates, with
21 the darkest area being 20 to 47 percent
22 below poverty rate, and then the next
23 lighter area being up to 55 percent
24 poverty rate.

25 And then crime scene cleanup

1 doesn't just impact homicide victims.
2 It also impacts any survivors of violent
3 crimes. And as we know, we had a lot of
4 shootings last year, so 2,167. Each of
5 those generate a crime scene. So we're
6 talking specifically about homicides
7 today, but this impacts any victim of a
8 violent crime.

9 MR. MARGOLIUS: So what happens
10 when people come home, and part of this
11 process we're going to go into a few of
12 the barriers that family and communities
13 face accessing professional cleanup
14 services. So one is that cleaning up a
15 crime scene is an immediate need in the
16 hours after a crime occurs. Families in
17 this time are in an acute state of
18 traumatic shock. People discuss
19 experiences of feeling like nothing is
20 real, going into feeling like they're
21 out of their bodies. And during this
22 time, we know that neurologically people
23 are cut off from parts of the brain that
24 are critical for planning, for
25 organizing, for working memory, for

1 language.

2 The next stage of this process
3 is people also have to research
4 providers, right. Families would have
5 to be put in the position of knowing
6 that companies exist and then figuring
7 out themselves how to find them, contact
8 them. The next step of the process
9 having spoken to crime scene cleanup
10 companies is that they actually ask very
11 detailed questions about the nature of
12 the crime. They ask detailed questions
13 about the caliber of the weapon that was
14 used, about the extent of bodily remains
15 at the scene. And these are questions
16 and information that families may have
17 not known and may have no interest in
18 knowing or may be desperate to forget.
19 But the process right now of even
20 recounting those details adds further
21 trauma to the experience, even if they
22 did research companies, at the same time
23 this is all happening at a time when
24 families are necessarily reaching out to
25 each other and coordinating and trying

1 to muster the energy to coordinate
2 funeral arrangements and a host of other
3 things on top of the financial burden of
4 organizing funerals and taking care of
5 medical bills.

6 Next slide, please. As
7 Stephanie mentioned, the cost out of
8 pocket, the expectation also is that
9 people would have to pay this out of
10 pocket, and the cost is \$2,000 to
11 \$20,000. Two local crime scene cleanup
12 companies gave that range. The
13 communities that are hardest hit by
14 homicides, you can see here on the
15 right, also have median household
16 incomes for the year that range from
17 20,000 to roughly 35,000. So the
18 out-of-pocket cost is exorbitant and
19 prohibitive, making private crime scene
20 cleanup companies inaccessible.

21 Next slide.

22 MS. Le CLAIR: So one of the
23 ways that survivors are expected to pay
24 for crime scene cleanup is through
25 private insurance, so either homeowner's

1 insurance or renter's insurance. Now,
2 if we look at the rate of homeownership
3 in Philadelphia, we'll see that the
4 lighter areas are where less percent of
5 the population owns their home, and
6 that's where most of the homicides took
7 place in the last five years.

8 Additionally, we know that
9 there is a racial homeownership gap,
10 where only 49 percent of Black
11 Philadelphians own their home and 76
12 percent of White Philadelphians own
13 their homes. Now, in the case where
14 Philadelphians rent their homes, which
15 is about 48 percent of Philadelphians,
16 renter's insurance is typically narrow
17 and may not cover a crime scene cleanup.

18 MR. MARGOLIUS: So VCAP is a
19 system set up for reimbursing crime
20 victims for expenses after a crime is
21 experienced. People may not have
22 information on VCAP at the time when a
23 crime occurs and can receive
24 reimbursement for up to two years, and
25 crime scene cleanup is a service that

1 can be reimbursed through VCAP.
2 However, the maximum reimbursement is
3 \$500, which hasn't been changed in over
4 20 years. And this reimbursement is
5 only eligible for crime scenes to happen
6 inside of a private residence, so that
7 excludes cars, homicides or shootings
8 that happen inside a private building
9 but an apartment building, for example,
10 but in a hallway and any shooting that
11 may happen outside which is the vast
12 majority of violent crime scenes.

13 As a result, VCAP in the past
14 three years has only reimbursed eight
15 claims for crime scene cleanup on
16 average per year across the whole state.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Can you
18 repeat that for the record?

19 MR. MARGOLIUS: VCAP for the
20 past three years on average has
21 reimbursed eight claims for crime scene
22 cleanup across the whole state.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Do you
24 happen to know how many from
25 Philadelphia?

1 MR. MARGOLIUS: I do not.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

3 MS. Le CLAIR: So after our
4 research, we decided to come up with
5 policy recommendations. The first
6 policy recommendation is that we mandate
7 City agencies responding to crime scene
8 to assume the logistical and financial
9 responsibility of removing biohazardous
10 materials.

11 In our research report, we
12 proposed two different options for doing
13 this, either the City runs its own
14 biohazard remediation team that cleans
15 up the crime scenes or, two, the City
16 uses the same model that they're using
17 for the tow rotational model, where the
18 City sets regulations for crime scene
19 companies that they have to follow and
20 standards, and then the law enforcement
21 dispatches different crime scene
22 companies that have a contract with the
23 City.

24 MR. MARGOLIUS: And we offer in
25 this new report two pilot opportunities

1 to take action immediately. One is that
2 eight zip codes in Philadelphia
3 highlighted on the right account for 55
4 percent of the homicides over the past
5 five years, just those eight zip codes,
6 so more than half of the homicides
7 happen in these eight zip codes. And
8 one pilot opportunity is to respond with
9 crime scene cleanup in just these zip
10 codes hardest hit by homicide that also
11 experience some of the highest rates of
12 poverty in the City.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Could you
14 state those zip codes again?

15 MR. MARGOLIUS: Yes. They are
16 19134, 19140, 19132, 19143, 19139,
17 19124, 19121, and 19133.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

19 MR. MARGOLIUS: Absolutely.
20 Another pilot that we proposed is
21 because families are more likely to
22 experience and interact with crime
23 scenes when a homicide happens inside
24 the home, is that the City of
25 Philadelphia responds to homicides that

1 happen inside of a private residence.
2 These homicides are also more frequently
3 related to intimate partner violence and
4 have child victims, adding complexity
5 and trauma for families to navigate, so
6 that is another pilot opportunity. And
7 roughly 20 percent of homicides of the
8 City of Philadelphia happen inside of a
9 private residence.

10 I'm going to read this quote
11 also from one of the survivors related
12 to our second policy recommendation.
13 "It would be nice if somebody told me
14 what I was getting ready to walk into or
15 said, hey, let me go get that for you,
16 you don't want to see that or something
17 but nothing. I mean, when the homicide
18 detectives told me that I could go down
19 there and retrieve the stuff, I wasn't
20 picturing I had to go to a bloody
21 vehicle and grab everything."

22 This policy recommendation is
23 to institute trauma-informed and
24 culturally sensitive training and
25 policies that enhance law enforcement's

1 communication with survivors of homicide
2 and victims of crime, particularly
3 families that described as this quote
4 exemplifies experience of not being
5 warned before going back to their home
6 or not being told that when they went to
7 retrieve loved ones' belongings from a
8 car, that it was still sitting in a pool
9 of blood. There's opportunities that
10 can be taken immediately to support law
11 enforcement's communications with
12 survivors and reduce ongoing harm that
13 families experience after a loved one is
14 killed.

15 MS. Le CLAIR: And our last
16 recommendation, Policy Recommendation
17 No. 3, is to increase accessibility of
18 information on crime scene cleanup for
19 Philadelphians, providing comprehensive
20 resources that educate and support
21 survivor. So two recommendations in
22 here would be that, one, the City puts
23 out guidelines for crime scene cleanup,
24 so how survivors should be handling
25 crime scene cleanup and disposing of the

1 waste. An example of that is done by
2 the New York City Health Department and
3 another recommendation is that the City
4 provides a list of all the biohazardous
5 remediation providers in the City, and
6 Florida Health Services have done that
7 in their own cities.

8 MR. MARGOLIUS: Again, thank
9 you so much to the Committee on Public
10 Safety for hearing stories of people who
11 experienced crime scene cleanup and this
12 important issue. We really appreciate
13 all of the attention that's being
14 brought to this and violence that's
15 happening across the City, needing
16 urgent attention. So thank you for the
17 opportunity to share these stories and
18 important experiences.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
20 for your testimony. Could you please
21 bear with us, be patient and stick
22 around.

23 We have two urgent hard stops
24 and then we want to get everybody's
25 testimony on the record, Committee

1 members. So we're going to hold
2 questions until everyone testifies, if
3 that is okay with the Committee.

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Hearing no
6 major objections I hope, Samantha, can
7 you read the next group to testify.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Excuse me,
9 Mr. Chair.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: This is
12 Councilman Johnson. Just want to be
13 recognized as being present.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
15 much, Member Johnson. This is one of
16 your issues. This might be something
17 you consider for your Office of Victims,
18 something that needs possibly to be
19 housed there, sir.

20 So with that, Samantha, can you
21 read the next group that you want to
22 testify.

23 THE CLERK: Kathy Buckley and
24 Debra Sandifer.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,

1 Sam.

2 Please state your name for the
3 record and begin your testimony.

4 MS. BUCKLEY: Good morning,
5 everyone, Councilman Jones and
6 Councilmembers. My name is Kathy
7 Buckley. I'm the Director of the Office
8 of Victim Services at the Pennsylvania
9 Commission on Crime and Delinquency. My
10 office oversees the implementation of
11 the Victims Compensation Program. We're
12 better known as VCAP. I'm accompanied
13 by our Chief Legal Counsel, Debra
14 Sandifer. She's an instrumental part of
15 our Victims Compensation Program. I'll
16 pause for Debra to introduce herself as
17 well.

18 MS. SANDIFER: Good morning,
19 Debra Sandifer here again, Chief Counsel
20 at the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime
21 and Delinquency. Good morning.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good
23 morning.

24 MS. BUCKLEY: So just to add on
25 to what Debra had just mentioned, we

1 rely on Debra's expertise to ensure the
2 program operates within the crime victim
3 statute and regulations that govern our
4 program. So on behalf of the agency, we
5 thank you for providing us the
6 opportunity to speak with you today
7 about crime scene cleanup. One of the
8 many expenses that our program provides
9 is financial assistance to victims of
10 crime.

11 As way of background, our
12 program was established as a
13 reimbursement program and is governed by
14 the Crime Victims Act, which is a state
15 law that provides guidelines for
16 eligibility and the benefits offered
17 through the Victim Compensation Program.
18 The Act also provides for funding a
19 program through a \$35 assessment on
20 every criminal offender convicted or who
21 has pled guilty in Pennsylvania. No
22 state tax dollars are used to fund the
23 program. Our program also receives an
24 annual Victims of Crime Act grant from
25 the federal Office for Victims of Crime.

1 That also partially supplements the cost
2 of the fund. So between those two
3 things, those are the two main sources
4 of funding for our program.

5 The federal grant is generated
6 by fees on criminal offenders at the
7 federal level. States with compensation
8 programs are eligible to receive this
9 funding, but together these streams are
10 what are used to support approximately
11 \$11 million to \$13 million in awards
12 that are issued annually to victims of
13 crimes in Pennsylvania.

14 So currently to be eligible for
15 victims compensation in Pennsylvania,
16 victims must generally meet the
17 following requirements for the law:
18 One, they must report the crime to
19 proper authorities within 72 hours or
20 file a protection release order; they
21 must cooperate with law enforcement,
22 prosecution and the Compensation
23 Program, and they must file a claim
24 within two years from the date of the
25 crime.

1 According to the law, the
2 benefits available for the reimbursement
3 through the Compensation Program and for
4 counseling, crime scene cleanup,
5 forensic rape examination, funeral
6 expenses, loss of earnings, loss of
7 support, medical expenses, relocation
8 expenses, replacement of personal health
9 items that have been stolen or damaged
10 such as a cane, dentures, a walker,
11 stolen cash, transportation expenses.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Hold it.
13 Can we check our mute buttons. I hear
14 keystrokes, possibly the stenographer
15 typing, if we can check our mute
16 buttons. Thank you. Continue.

17 MS. BUCKLEY: Thank you. In
18 general, the maximum amount that can be
19 paid through Victims Compensation is
20 \$35,000 per claim. However, there are
21 three specialized exceptions to that.
22 One is an additional \$1,000 may be paid
23 for forensics rape examination above the
24 35,000. Up to \$10,000 is available for
25 counseling and up to \$500 is available

1 for crime scene cleanup. State law
2 requires our program to only pay up to
3 \$500 for crime scene cleanup expenses of
4 a private residence.

5 According to the statute,
6 cleaning means to remove or attempt to
7 remove blood and stains caused by bodily
8 fluids, food, paint or oral materials
9 used to deface property within a private
10 residence or other dirt and debris
11 caused by the processing of a crime
12 scene. A private residence includes a
13 house, apartment, condominium, mobile
14 home or other personal living space, so
15 they don't have to own. They can also
16 be living there and rent.

17 Anyone, including a landlord or
18 property manager who assumes the
19 responsibility to pay for the crime
20 cleanup of a crime scene, is eligible
21 for reimbursement. So eligible expenses
22 include the cost of cleaning supplies
23 that are purchased for cleaning the
24 scene, the cost of any necessary
25 equipment purchased or rented and the

1 cost of professional labor for cleaning
2 the crime scene. Overall, crime scene
3 cleanup makes up a very small portion of
4 a request to VCAP. We would welcome
5 your feedback and comments on the Crime
6 Victims Act in relation to crime scene
7 cleanup so that we are able to pass them
8 on to members of the General Assembly
9 for their consideration. We appreciate
10 the opportunity to present to this
11 Council and will be happy to pause and
12 answer any questions that you may have.
13 I recognize that you said you wanted to
14 hold that. But Debra and I are
15 available right now to start answering
16 those, if that's okay with you.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: So,
18 Samantha. Samantha.

19 THE CLERK: Yes, I'm here.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Is this an
21 interlude where we can actually ask
22 questions or are we pressed to get the
23 other panelists to testify?

24 THE CLERK: We can take
25 questions now.

1 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

2 THE CLERK: You're welcome.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Members of
4 the Committee, I will allow you guys to
5 go before me -- I have some specific
6 questions -- if you have them.

7 Is there anyone in the chat
8 feature, Sam, that wants to be
9 recognized?

10 THE CLERK: Councilmember Domb
11 has questions.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES:
13 Councilmember Domb.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
15 Mr. Chair. My questions was for the
16 prior panel. I know you have a time
17 frame. Let me wait for all the panels
18 are done.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are there
20 any others, Samantha?

21 THE CLERK: Councilmember
22 Gauthier had a comment.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Member
24 Gauthier.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank

1 you, Mr. Chair.

2 I just wanted to thank the
3 panel, AVP in particular and all of the
4 people who shared their stories and
5 contributed to that report. I really
6 didn't understand this aspect of
7 homicides, how it works in our City
8 until you started this work, Chairman
9 Jones. And it's mindboggling to me.
10 And I think that we have to support our
11 citizens in a better way. And so, I
12 just thank AVP for the report.

13 I thank you for this hearing
14 and I look forward to being a part of an
15 immediate solution to change this
16 situation and support people,
17 particularly in our Black and Brown
18 neighborhoods, much better.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
20 much, Member Gauthier. You and I share
21 a strange -- not just by borders within
22 our Council Districts, but the murder
23 rates within our Districts as well.

24 Let's dive right in. So two
25 things: One, and anyone can answer

1 these questions, if I understood
2 everyone correctly, it is private
3 residence, apartments and houses and
4 motor vehicles that are available, also
5 cars; is that correct?

6 MS. SANDIFER: No, that is not
7 correct.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Can you
9 state --

10 MS. SANDIFER: Excuse me.
11 Again, Debra Sandifer. The Crime
12 Victims Act speaks to private residence,
13 and that includes some of the things you
14 did mention, Councilmember Jones, homes,
15 rentals. But the word is residence,
16 which does not include a motor vehicle.

17 MS. Le CLAIR: And it's also
18 inside the residence, so not the porch
19 or the outside of the house or garden or
20 anything like that.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: So the vast
22 majority of people, as I remember the
23 testimony, are shot on the streets of
24 Philadelphia, they're not eligible?

25 MR. MARGOLIUS: Correct.

1 COUNCILMAN JONES: Correct, all
2 right.

3 MR. MARGOLIUS: Yes.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: So in the
5 case where -- can you help me understand
6 why only eight people in the
7 Commonwealth were eligible for the \$500
8 reimbursement?

9 MS. BUCKLEY: I can speak to
10 some of that, Councilman Jones. I can
11 tell you that we've had approximately
12 500 claims submitted for crime scene
13 cleanup across the Commonwealth from
14 2018 to 2020. However, there's a number
15 of caveats with that. I think Sam and
16 Stephanie, I appreciate their comments
17 and explanations and their advocacy
18 because their presentation was really
19 articulate.

20 Part of what our claims include
21 is they're part of an overall general
22 claim process. So they may have applied
23 for other types of expenses such as
24 counseling or they could have been
25 claims that were filed for property

1 crime and then checked off crime scene
2 cleanup, not knowing that their claim in
3 and of itself was not eligible. But
4 what we do not have the information to
5 provide you today is identifying out of
6 those 500 claims over 200 out of
7 Philadelphia, which ones may have been
8 approved, which ones have not because
9 they weren't eligible, and then also
10 identifying those that have been
11 approved but maybe we are waiting for
12 the documentation to come forward. And
13 also, out of that 200, some of them as
14 Sam and Stephanie have mentioned,
15 they're not within a private residence.
16 We didn't have time to go through all of
17 those claims prior to this meeting to
18 give you that information.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: So
20 without -- listen, I've learned as a
21 Member that's been around a couple of
22 years now, that I don't want to point
23 fingers. I want to point to solutions.
24 How do we get -- unfortunately, I would
25 hope to stop the murders so we need not

1 have claims placed. But if we're going
2 to deal with this pandemic of homicides,
3 how do we get better at reimbursements
4 to exceed eight? We get eight in a
5 weekend sometimes in Philadelphia. So
6 if you are advising people, us in
7 Philadelphia and people, how do we get
8 better results out of that particular
9 pool of dollars? And I'm going to get
10 to why only \$500 next. But could you
11 answer that?

12 MS. BUCKLEY: I would respond
13 that our program has to operate within
14 the guidelines of the law and the
15 statutes, so we're extremely limited on
16 what we can make decisions on and that
17 includes the \$500. We can't pay more
18 than \$500 because that's all that's
19 allowable under the Crime Victims Act.
20 So until the statute is changed, that's
21 the parameters we have to offer it
22 under.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: So if I
24 heard you correctly, we need to reach
25 out to our state legislatures to take a

1 look at updating this particular
2 statute?

3 MS. BUCKLEY: That would be
4 correct. To expand the eligibility and
5 the amount of expenses, that's what
6 would need to be done in order to allow
7 us to pay more. I will also add that
8 it's important for this body to know
9 that whenever we expand and increase the
10 amount of money, we also have to think
11 about how we're going to generate
12 revenue into the program, or else we
13 will continue to pay more than what
14 we're bringing in.

15 And I think at the beginning as
16 you heard, our program is mainly funded
17 on a \$35 assessment on offenders. So we
18 need to increase other types of revenue
19 coming in so we can expend, or else the
20 program in the near future will not be
21 able to sustain itself.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Understood
23 and duly noted. But if we look at \$35
24 assessment on a person who commits a
25 homicide, I'm going to look there as

1 well.

2 Are there any other questions
3 for the panel, Members?

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, I
5 have a question.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Member
7 Johnson.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes. And
9 so, my question's regarding who
10 qualifies for the reimbursement when
11 there's a homicide? I know there's been
12 a little controversy in the victims
13 advocacy community regarding like if a
14 young man just happens to be living some
15 type of lifestyle but his life is taken,
16 because if you have a mom who's low
17 income or struggling to pay for the
18 funeral expenses and has nothing to do
19 with her son's actions, but the son
20 don't qualify because his actions may
21 have been criminal or may have
22 contributed to his death, has that issue
23 ever been addressed?

24 And also, has there been any
25 movements regarding raising the

1 reimbursement for funeral cost, and then
2 also is there education around all these
3 other services that are provided to
4 victims who have lost loved ones to gun
5 violence, because some of the things
6 that were just mentioned is new to me
7 besides the funeral services
8 reimbursement?

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Anyone can
10 answer that question.

11 MS. SANDIFER: I would like to
12 comment on the contributory piece, if
13 Councilperson --

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: State your
15 name again, please.

16 MS. SANDIFER: Debra Sandifer.
17 This is Debra Sandifer, Chief Counsel
18 from PCCD, Commission on Crime and
19 Delinquency. The Crime Victims Act
20 requires the VCAP program to consider
21 the contributory conduct of the victim.
22 It actually requires the program to
23 consider that, to assess that when
24 making determinations about the award
25 that would go to the claimant. So if

1 we're talking about a homicide victim
2 and that claimant is a loved one, a
3 family member, that is what the program
4 is required to do, again by law.

5 Since I have been at the agency
6 for five years now, one of things that
7 we try to do is we work very much in
8 concert with the program and we actually
9 sit down and review cases. With every
10 different fact pattern, there is
11 something that you need to work through
12 and you need to talk about. So when
13 we're sitting around the table, we have
14 people who are from the program, who
15 have a particular kind of training and
16 discipline. You have myself and
17 probably one other attorney from my
18 office with our different perspective,
19 and we talk through things. And I think
20 we're very proud of our results in that
21 regard because we're talking about life
22 experiences, we're talking about -- the
23 other attorney has 30 years as a public
24 defender. I have had a varied existence
25 in the criminal justice system and

1 that's basically the way that we do it.

2 I wanted to make a comment also
3 about the funeral expenses. That would
4 be something very similar to the crime
5 scene cleanup. The Crime Victims Act
6 requires that there be a cap on that
7 amount. So again, if that number were
8 to change, that would have to come
9 through the General Assembly.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: To your
11 recollection, what is the cap on the
12 funeral reimbursement?

13 MS. SANDIFER: I believe is it
14 6,000, Kathy?

15 MS. BUCKLEY: It's 6500.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: And do these
17 things -- either/or or and, can you have
18 both when you check those boxes or is
19 there a cap on that? Can you get a
20 funeral reimbursement and can you get a
21 crime cleanup reimbursement?

22 MS. BUCKLEY: Yes, you can.
23 You can get both. There's just a cap on
24 both as we mentioned, 6500, and then
25 500. The total claim in and of itself

1 can be at least 35,000 if they also come
2 in for counseling and those types of
3 things.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Mr. Chair,
6 this is very, very helpful information.
7 Obviously, we're working through the
8 details regarding the Office of Victim
9 Advocates. And so, we'll be working
10 very closely with you, Kathleen and
11 Debra, as we formulate our roll-out as
12 well as I'm working with Senator Anthony
13 Hardy Williams and Sharif Street
14 regarding the Office of Victim Advocates
15 on the state level.

16 I know y'all have a vacancy
17 right now and looking for candidates to
18 replace Jennifer Storm. But some of
19 this information, besides just being
20 reimbursed for funeral expenses, is new
21 information for me. So I just want to
22 do a follow-up and more of a deeper dive
23 just so when we're dealing with our
24 constituents in terms of trauma
25 counseling, which is very, very

1 important and critical, right. I've
2 never had the opportunity to offer that
3 particular service.

4 So I guess the other part is
5 when you're working with police
6 departments, and I guess I'm only
7 thinking about the City of Philadelphia
8 but you represent the state so it's
9 police departments across the state of
10 Pa, how do you engage in the trained
11 component with those police departments
12 to make sure they're getting this
13 information out?

14 I've been doing this for at
15 least 20 years as an activist but 10
16 years as an elected official, and I
17 haven't heard a community relations
18 officer say, well, you can receive
19 trauma-support services for free or get
20 reimbursed as also part of you
21 addressing the homicide that may have
22 taken place. So how does that work?

23 MS. SANDIFER: If I might
24 speak, this is Debra Sandifer again.
25 Before I turn most of your question,

1 Councilperson Johnson, over to Kathy
2 Buckley, I want to finish out something
3 about the contributory conduct piece.
4 What I didn't say and I should have was
5 that the Crime Victims Act also require
6 that there are certain circumstances
7 where we do not and cannot consider
8 contributory conduct. When you
9 mentioned counseling, it brought it to
10 my mind.

11 When it comes to a claim for
12 counseling submitted by a loved one of a
13 homicide victim, we cannot and do not
14 consider the contributory conduct of a
15 victim. That is also the case in the
16 area of certain sexual assaults. We
17 cannot and do not consider the
18 contributory conduct of the victim. And
19 with that, I think Kathy Buckley can
20 speak to what things of the program does
21 and trains on in order to get
22 information out to the public through
23 police officers.

24 MS. BUCKLEY: So in
25 Philadelphia specifically, we work with

1 the victim assistance officers in each
2 of the police districts, and they then
3 inform and work with their colleagues
4 within law enforcement. Law enforcement
5 under the Crime Victims Act is required
6 to hand out basic information to crime
7 victims, and that includes information
8 on the basic rights and availability of
9 compensation is on this form and then
10 also information about some local victim
11 service programs. But first and
12 foremost, we rely heavily on law
13 enforcement and programs such as AVP
14 because they're our extension. We would
15 not meet and get to as many victims and
16 survivors of a crime if it wasn't for
17 the great work that they do.

18 In terms of law enforcement,
19 we're ramping up some additional
20 training that we're going to be doing in
21 the near future to go over the handing
22 out of that law enforcement information,
23 a continual type of process.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Member
25 Johnson --

1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
2 very much.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
4 Member Johnson.

5 I just want to thank you for
6 the work that you guys do at the state
7 level. I'm very much aware of it, but
8 we can always do better. We can always
9 look to statutes that need to be
10 updated. The cost of a funeral, but
11 more importantly the cost to ongoing
12 trauma is extensive, and in our
13 districts whether you talk about the 3rd
14 District, the 2nd District, the 4th
15 District, we see it every day. And to
16 know and be fully aware that all of
17 these programs exist even if they need
18 to be updated is better than drawing a
19 blank when we talk to a victim or a
20 survivor of a crime. And so, we need
21 you. And we need for you to guide us on
22 how we can be helpful in dealing with
23 that.

24 Were there any other questions
25 of the Committee?

1 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Mr. Chair, I
2 have a quick question.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: I will go
4 with Domb first, Member Green, and then
5 you.

6 Member Domb.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
8 Mr. Chair.

9 And thank you, everyone, for
10 your testimony today. I have a
11 question. I think it's to Sam
12 Margolius. I think you mentioned, Sam,
13 that eight zip codes have the highest
14 homicide rate in the City right now.
15 What was the percentage of what those
16 homicides -- was that 55 percent of the
17 homicide rates in those eight zip codes?

18 MR. MARGOLIUS: Yeah. So we're
19 looking at totals of homicide, not
20 homicide rate. But total homicides from
21 2016 through 2020, and those eight zip
22 codes accounted for 55 percent with a
23 big gap between those eight zip codes.
24 I think the eight zip codes had 90 or
25 more homicides, and the next highest zip

1 code had in the middle of the 60s.

2 MS. Le CLAIR: Yeah, 67.

3 MR. MARGOLIUS: 67.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Can you share
5 with the Chair those zip codes and
6 percentages so we can distribute them?

7 MR. MARGOLIUS: Absolutely.

8 MS. Le CLAIR: Yes. And it's
9 in the report as well.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: I would like
11 to send that report to the members of
12 this Committee.

13 MR. MARGOLIUS: If it's also
14 helpful, I would love to share and as
15 part of the report, we looked at
16 neighboring state reimbursements for
17 crime scene cleanup and looked at New
18 Jersey reimburses for crime scene
19 cleanup up to 4,000. New York
20 reimburses up to 2500 and Delaware up to
21 1,000, just the comparable states in the
22 region.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And the other
24 question I have was I saw a chart, I'm
25 not sure I understood it totally.

1 You're talking about homeownership
2 rates, I believe. Was that a
3 correlation between the homeownership
4 rate and the homicide rate?

5 MS. Le CLAIR: Yes. So on that
6 map, the dots were homicides and then
7 the colors indicated the percent of
8 homeownership.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Were those
10 homeownership rates lower in those zip
11 codes?

12 MR. MARGOLIUS: Exactly.

13 MS. Le CLAIR: Yes.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: All right.
15 Thank you very much for your testimony.

16 Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

17 MR. MARGOLIUS: And that's
18 because --

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
20 Member Domb.

21 MR. MARGOLIUS: -- is
22 identified as the primary source of
23 payment that could put the out-of-pocket
24 cost for families, right. So the 2,000
25 to 20,000 typically comes from

1 homeowner's insurance if they have it.

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Let me ask
3 you one last question: Do you think if
4 we had a focus on those eight zip codes
5 not just for crime prevention but also
6 for promoting homeownership, that we
7 could make a big impact?

8 MR. MARGOLIUS: Absolutely.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you
10 very much for your testimony.

11 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
13 Member Domb.

14 Member Green.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
16 Mr. Chair.

17 Councilmember Domb's question
18 somewhat echoes what I was going to ask,
19 and I was curious in reference to other
20 jurisdictions. You mentioned New
21 Jersey, Delaware, New York. From your
22 research and other parts of the nation,
23 how are other states funding this type
24 of work?

25 MR. MARGOLIUS: Specifically

1 around crime scene cleanup?

2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Correct.

3 MR. MARGOLIUS: So those are
4 the numbers we have for states in the
5 region on reimbursement. And
6 unfortunately, what we found in doing
7 some of our research was that the burden
8 is most commonly placed on families to
9 coordinate the logistics and to pay out
10 of pocket. We didn't identify another
11 place where a locality and municipality
12 removed that burden, and that's part of
13 what we're advocating for the City of
14 Philadelphia to do, is because this is a
15 prohibitive cost out of pocket. It's
16 inaccessible and inequitable. And so,
17 we're advocating that the City of
18 Philadelphia take actions to remove
19 these burdens. But we didn't find other
20 places that do it better as a model.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Did you find
22 other jurisdictions that provided more
23 dollars in reference to reimbursement or
24 other sources of funding?

25 MR. MARGOLIUS: Yes. In

1 addition to the ones in our region that
2 we mentioned, California, Oregon, more
3 states out West, Ohio I believe was 750.
4 And some reimbursed slightly lower. For
5 example, Maryland I believe is only
6 \$250.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And those
8 states that provided more money for
9 reimbursement, was that just out of the
10 general fund or was that other funding
11 sources?

12 MR. MARGOLIUS: I'm not aware.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: That's
14 something, Member Green, we do need to
15 do a deeper dive on.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yes. The
17 reason I asked that question I think
18 also through -- and Councilmember
19 Johnson talked about the work he's doing
20 with Senators Williams and Street -- my
21 role with Pennsylvania Municipal League,
22 I would venture this is an issue not
23 just for the City of Philadelphia but
24 other cities around the Commonwealth
25 including Norristown, Coatesville, Erie,

1 Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Reading, who all
2 have the same issues and concerns and
3 there's not enough dollars for this
4 issue, even at the reimbursement level.

5 And so, to the extent that we
6 can emulate what's happening in other
7 jurisdictions and other states at higher
8 amounts of reimbursement, that's
9 something that can be helpful and
10 beneficial, and I think other cities who
11 also have been dealing with some of the
12 same challenges, be it not at the same
13 level of Philadelphia, will be
14 supportive of this type of work.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Duly noted,
16 Member Green.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.
18 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are there
20 any others to question this group of
21 panelists?

22 THE CLERK: Councilmember Gym
23 had a question.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Member Gym.
25 Member Gym.

1 (No response.)

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. Is
3 there anyone else, Ms. Williams?

4 THE CLERK: No.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: So can you
6 please repeat your recommendations? I
7 think there were three. Can you restate
8 them for us?

9 MR. MARGOLIUS: Sure. Policy
10 Recommendation No. 1 was that the City
11 act to assume the logistical and
12 financial responsibility for crime scene
13 cleanup services. We offer two models
14 as opportunities to do that. One, by
15 creating a team within the City, a
16 biohazard removal team, that can be
17 housed in a City department and respond
18 to scenes across the City.

19 Another option that we
20 recommend is the City rotational towing
21 program as a model that uses dispatch to
22 send towing companies to scenes across
23 the City and have a similar model for
24 pricing structures and regulations and
25 crime scene cleanup companies to respond

1 across the City, private companies that
2 already exist and provide the service.
3 And we offer two pilots within that
4 policy recommendation, one for those
5 eight zip codes and one to respond to
6 private residences where homicides
7 happen.

8 Policy Recommendation No. 2 was
9 to enact training and policies on
10 trauma-informed care and cultural
11 sensitivity for law enforcement. And
12 Policy No. 3 was to increase access to
13 information on what's involved in crime
14 scene cleanup at the City level so that
15 families are aware of information
16 relevant to the health risks, relevant
17 to accessing private services to avoid
18 the ongoing trauma and physical harm.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Point of
20 information --

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'd like to
22 hear zip code exemption as well. What
23 number was that, the eight zip codes?

24 MR. MARGOLIUS: The eight zip
25 codes was one of the pilot

1 opportunities, was to focus on the eight
2 zip codes hardest hit by homicide that
3 also experience high rates of poverty.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I want to
5 consider that one of your
6 recommendations and definitely want to
7 bring that to the attention of City
8 departments.

9 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Mr. Chair, I
10 have a point of information.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Point of
12 information. Recognize Councilmember
13 Green.

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: For those
15 three suggestions that you made in
16 reference to logistics, access to
17 information as well as the pilot, do you
18 have a range of cost for those three
19 pilot areas?

20 MR. MARGOLIUS: We do. And in
21 addition to the report that will be
22 shared with City Council, there's a memo
23 accompanying it with our best ranges of
24 estimated costs associated with each.

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And for the

1 record, can you just state the range of
2 cost for each of the three and then
3 all-in for all three?

4 MR. MARGOLIUS: So the national
5 estimated average per crime scene
6 cleanup service is \$2,000 to \$4500 so
7 the -- or \$2500 to \$4,000, excuse me.
8 Let me pull it up.

9 Stephanie, you may have it more
10 accessible than I do. But for
11 responding to homicides that happened in
12 just those eight zip codes, roughly from
13 my memory it was around \$450,000 to
14 \$790,000 to respond and remove the
15 biohazardous material just from those
16 zip codes, and that's annually based off
17 of homicide totals over the past five
18 years.

19 It would be less than that for
20 just responding to homicides in a
21 private residence --

22 MR. Le CLAIR: I'm sorry. I
23 have the numbers. For the pilot for the
24 eight zip codes that are hardest hit by
25 homicides, the range was \$497,500 to

1 \$796,000 annually.

2 MR. MARGOLIUS: And for the
3 private residential?

4 MR. Le CLAIR: Yeah, for that
5 one is \$210,000 to \$336,000 per year.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: So in
7 addition, Samantha -- Samantha?

8 THE CLERK: Yes.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: We want to
10 ask the Philadelphia Police Department
11 what they do when it comes to outdoor
12 public space homicide cleanups.

13 THE CLERK: The Philadelphia
14 Police Department is here and testifying
15 next.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Well, there
17 you go. All right.

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And one
19 final point, Mr. Chair.

20 Did you provide any information
21 on the range of cost for the logistics
22 piece of your proposal?

23 MR. MARGOLIUS: I don't believe
24 that we do. Those costs are only
25 associated for removing the crime

1 scene -- for removing biohazards.

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

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
5 Member Green.

6 And with that, thank you for
7 your testimony. Insightful, very
8 disturbing but that's why we're here, to
9 deal with the hard issues.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Mr. Chair.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I just
13 wanted to say that I'm back. I think I
14 missed my queue. I apologize.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
16 Thank you. Would you like to question
17 this panel?

18 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes. I just
19 have a few questions --

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Member Gym.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And I think
22 that the stenographer is unmuted. So if
23 our stenographer can mute, that would be
24 helpful. Thank you.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Go ahead,

1 Member Green -- I mean, Member Gym.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: No problem.

3 So --

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Please check
5 your mute button. All right.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you.
7 First of all, I want to thank the
8 Resolution sponsor and the Chair and our
9 colleagues for having this important
10 discussion and certainly think that the
11 pilot program is an important area for
12 us to push further on. But in the
13 meantime, it does still sound like there
14 are issues within the broader state
15 program that we are working to
16 supplement. And I just want to make
17 sure that we are going to be pushing
18 hard to make changes in the state
19 program that expand opportunities.

20 Certainly, it calls upon us to
21 support our own victim witness service
22 agencies here locally to be able to
23 advertise the Compensation Fund and
24 supports, especially for homicide
25 victims or shooting victims where

1 there's the likelihood of seeing so much
2 potential property issues and
3 everything. So a couple of the
4 questions that I had were around how
5 VCAP has certain requirements that have
6 been of concern, and I just want to
7 double-check those.

8 So among those is you cannot
9 access the VCAP funds if you are
10 considered to be involved in a crime and
11 that the victim must be in cooperation
12 with the prosecution; is that accurate?
13 And can you just talk a little bit more
14 about how that impacts people's access
15 to the fund for this particular
16 situation around cleanup?

17 MS. SANDIFER: This is Debra
18 Sandifer again, Chief Counsel, PCCB. I
19 think the language in the Crime Victims
20 Act is that in order for claimants to be
21 eligible they have to cooperate with law
22 enforcement, so it's not quite specified
23 that it be with the prosecution. It is
24 just cooperate with law enforcement.
25 And that has been interpreted to mean

1 any number of things, from being
2 available for interviews and phone calls
3 and participating in investigation and
4 revealing the information that is known.

5 But what is also true is that
6 the Crime Victims Act recognizes that
7 there are some situations where
8 individuals, where the claimants would
9 not be able to participate and it sets
10 out things like the program is to
11 consider when looking at eligibility and
12 lack of cooperation such as a
13 determination made about safety, and
14 that sort of thing. So that is one way
15 that the Crime Victims Act speaks to
16 that and requires cooperation unless
17 there is some reason for a lack of
18 cooperation, including safety or danger
19 to the claimant.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And is that
21 determined by -- is that determined by a
22 detective or who makes that
23 determination?

24 MS. SANDIFER: I would say it's
25 a collaborative effort. The program

1 itself makes the decisions and the final
2 arbiter, if you will, would be my
3 office, Office of Chief Counsel with
4 VCAP when there is a question. But what
5 happens with respect to law enforcement,
6 is that the program examines, reports
7 and that sort of thing that do come from
8 police departments. They of course are
9 in communication with claimants who make
10 their appeal for the award directly to
11 the program and that's how the
12 determination is made. It's made at the
13 program level.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Do you feel
15 like victims would agree that the
16 program is collaborative? In other
17 words, that their testimony or their
18 claim would weigh as heavily as their --
19 for example, if a detective was
20 unresponsive or if the PPD were
21 unresponsive?

22 MS. SANDIFER: I'm not sure
23 what you're asking. I really can't
24 speak to what a victim would feel about
25 the program. But I don't know if I'm

1 heading off in a different direction.
2 But there are opportunities for a
3 claimant to speak directly with the
4 person handling the claim and if there's
5 an adverse decision, if you will,
6 there's the opportunity to request
7 reconsideration and then there's also
8 the opportunity to request an appeal
9 before a hearing examiner at the state
10 department level. I'm not sure if
11 that's answering your question.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Well, what
13 I'm saying is that there have been
14 adverse reactions, right. I think my
15 earlier colleague said that Philadelphia
16 claims have been rejected, denied, don't
17 give a full amount of data on it; is
18 that accurate?

19 MS. SANDIFER: Again, I'm not
20 sure --

21 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Claims by
22 Philadelphians requesting assistance
23 into the program, they were denied or
24 deemed ineligible?

25 MS. SANDIFER: Ineligible, I'm

1 not sure what you mean by ineligible.

2 For what basis?

3 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I don't
4 specifically know. I guess that's the
5 question. Is anyone reviewing some of
6 the claims that were asked for why these
7 victims were deemed ineligible? Do you
8 even have data on the percent of claims
9 that have been requested and then
10 reimbursed? I mean, there's only been
11 eight. I assume that there have been
12 more claims.

13 MS. BUCKLEY: I'm sorry. This
14 is Kathy Buckley, if I may intervene.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you.

16 MS. BUCKLEY: So you're talking
17 about the crime scene cleanup claims?

18 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Correct.

19 MR. BUCKLEY: So there are a
20 number of claims that may have been
21 approved through crime scene cleanup but
22 we haven't paid yet. So in order for us
23 to kind of gauge the number of claims
24 that are involved, we would need more
25 time to go through and they may have

1 been already paid for other types of
2 expenditures like therapy or funeral
3 expenses or maybe we're still waiting
4 for documentation on a crime scene
5 cleanup. That does happen quite often.
6 But the --

7 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Do you have
8 data from a prior year? Can you just
9 give me 2019 data?

10 MS. BUCKLEY: That's the hard
11 part. We would need time to go through
12 our claims because there are multiple
13 types of expenses that the claims can be
14 paid on. So we would have to make sure
15 we're going through the claims pretty
16 thoroughly to ensure that we're looking
17 at everything correctly to identify
18 those that have been paid on and what
19 expenses and then those that have not.

20 Some of the crime scene
21 expenses may not have been paid because
22 they weren't eligible because maybe it
23 wasn't at the private residence. So
24 hence, that's where the statute comes
25 into play about where we're allowed to

1 pay and where we're not allowed to pay.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So one of
3 the things that I just want to
4 underscore is first of all, I want to
5 underscore on behalf of our entire City
6 and our City Council body that this fund
7 is very important to us and we
8 appreciate the work that everybody does
9 there. This hearing is specifically
10 about crime scene cleanup. So, yes, all
11 my questions was about crime scene
12 cleanup.

13 MS. BUCKLEY: Okay.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: One of the
15 things that we feel is difficult or I
16 have experienced challenges at the state
17 level is that we don't typically do data
18 analysis. We are discussing here in the
19 absence of current state funding and
20 perhaps restricted measures around VCAP
21 that do not allow Philadelphians to
22 access it, so we may have to pilot that
23 money on our own.

24 Potentially, that's under
25 discussion right now, right. That's

1 been a request that's been made, a
2 recommendation that's been made by
3 certain individuals who are on here.
4 And one of the things that we want to
5 understand is that the state needs to be
6 doing a better job around this. We
7 cannot actually do a better job if we
8 don't have data.

9 So it seems, Mr. Chair, one of
10 the things you would want to request
11 from the state is a relatively
12 comprehensive review of claims, not just
13 things that have been disbursed, but
14 claims that were made, a data analysis
15 about, you know, I would like to know by
16 race, by zip code or location or
17 neighborhood, however it's located. And
18 in the most ideal sense, a little bit of
19 a quality control investigation in terms
20 of whether claims were deemed ineligible
21 under what basis, some kind of a
22 category of basis. So that if we are
23 finding patterns that seem unreasonable
24 or in the case of the City of
25 Philadelphia which has seen so many

1 families and communities who are --
2 either way it doesn't matter if you're
3 involved in a crime or not, these
4 communities, these neighborhoods need
5 assistance because many of them are
6 happening in places where clearly a
7 \$4500 crime scene cleanup cannot be
8 managed by many of them. And thus,
9 people are retraumatized over and over
10 again.

11 So my question is, is this
12 information that I was discussing which
13 is kind of a comprehensive review of
14 claims around crime scene cleanup,
15 because that's what this hearing is
16 about, are reviewed by race, by zip
17 code, by location and then whether if
18 they were deemed ineligible, which the
19 majority obviously are, which the state
20 does not distribute around this, under
21 what terms are they deemed ineligible
22 and that you can make that public so
23 that we can better understand how to
24 proceed?

25 And I do not have a problem

1 with pilot programs. I do not have a
2 problem with advocacy. I do want to
3 make sure that the work that we do and
4 that the issues are being brought
5 forward here by many victims and victim
6 families is something that the state
7 will also be making adjustments for in
8 their own programming. So it's not just
9 Philadelphia paying into something but
10 actually we are changing the experience
11 statewide for individuals who are
12 victims of violence and require crime
13 scene cleanup.

14 This is a traumatic issue for
15 many families. I think we're hearing
16 that and have witnessed it certainly.
17 And it feels almost in the realm of
18 first responder kind of a mentality and
19 trauma-related type of services, right,
20 to not force a family to have to either
21 clean it up themselves or to have to
22 require them to reach beyond their means
23 for it. So that's the question, and
24 it's specifically asking about state
25 level data. Do you have it? I think

1 you have it. Do you review it? If you
2 don't review it, when can you review it
3 and give back to us a report?

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Member Gym,
5 that was succinct and I think the
6 question is reasonable for an answer.
7 And so, we will forward that officially
8 to your agency to give you time to
9 gather that data for us. All right.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
11 very much, Mr. Chair.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
13 Member Gym.

14 Samantha, it is 11 o'clock. We
15 have a hard stop at 11:30. Can you
16 bring the next group to testify.

17 THE CLERK: Sure. Michael --

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: And thank
19 you all. Go ahead, Sam.

20 THE CLERK: Michael Garvey is
21 the next witness to testify.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are there
23 any others after that?

24 THE CLERK: Yes. We do have
25 eight witnesses after that. The hard

1 stop is at 12:30 so we have about an
2 hour and a half.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. We
4 have time. All right. Thank you.

5 State your name for the record
6 and please begin your testimony.

7 MR. GARVEY: Absolutely, sir.
8 Pardon me for one minute while I share
9 my screen with you and then I will
10 start. Thank you.

11 I just want to check to see if
12 it's sharing.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes. I
14 think we're good.

15 MR. GARVEY: Excellent, sir.
16 It seems to be frozen.

17 Good morning, Chairmember Jones
18 and other members of the Committee on
19 Public Safety. My name is Michael
20 Garvey, the Director of the Philadelphia
21 Police Department's Office of Forensic
22 Science. I'm here on behalf of Police
23 Commissioner Outlaw regarding Resolution
24 No. 210090.

25 First, on behalf of

1 Commissioner Outlaw, thank you for
2 allowing the Police Department to be
3 included in this discussion. The Police
4 Department is aware of the topic of
5 crime scene cleanup, which is the term
6 applied to the proper cleanup of blood,
7 bodily fluids or other potentially
8 infectious material after an incident,
9 such as a homicide or other violent
10 crime. It may also refer to the cleanup
11 and repair of physical damage that has
12 occurred on private or public property
13 as a result of criminal activity, such
14 as the shattering of glass or bullet
15 holes into a wall.

16 I would like to make the
17 distinction between crime scene cleanup
18 and crime scene processing. The Police
19 Department is responsible for crime
20 scene processing. On the identification
21 of a crime scene, police officers secure
22 the scene for processing. Once the
23 appropriate legal authority has been
24 obtained to process the scene,
25 detectives or Office of Forensic

1 Science's Crime Scene Unit examiners
2 will document, photograph and collect
3 evidence. The Crime Scene Unit responds
4 to all homicides, officer-involved
5 shootings and other complicated scenes.
6 Detectives process other scenes such as
7 nonfatal shootings. Typically, crime
8 scene processing by a forensic examiner
9 involves detailed notes, sketches,
10 photographs and possibly video to
11 document the conditions of the scene and
12 evidence. Evidence is collected to
13 preserve its forensic value for future
14 analysis.

15 Once the crime scene has been
16 fully processed with all evidence
17 collected, the Police Department
18 releases the scene. At this point, the
19 crime scene responsibilities of the
20 Police Department has ended. If a crime
21 scene is located outside on a public
22 street or sidewalk, the Police
23 Department will at times request the
24 services of the Philadelphia Fire
25 Department to hose down the public

1 space. Crime scenes on private
2 property, whether interior or exterior,
3 are not cleaned or repaired by the City.
4 The cleanup and repair associated with
5 these scenes is the responsibility of
6 the person responsible for that
7 property. Often these tasks fall onto
8 the family members of the victim.

9 Repair and cleanup may also be
10 needed for secondary scenes. Bullets
11 often strike other homes or cars,
12 shattering windows and causing damage to
13 enabling properties --

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I'm sorry.
15 Could I just pause here for one second,
16 Mr. Chair?

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I feel like
19 it's important -- while I appreciate the
20 PowerPoint, I do feel like it's
21 important that we let the public know
22 that there are extremely graphic scenes
23 here that are being presented and that
24 people have a right to know ahead of the
25 presentation. I know we got the PPD's

1 PowerPoint relatively late. But it
2 feels important to let people know this
3 is an important issue and we want to
4 express the understanding that there is
5 a significant amount of trauma
6 associated with this conversation,
7 especially for those who are seeking a
8 better path towards reimbursement.

9 I think it's important for us
10 to very clearly state that this
11 presentation has already shown and may
12 continue to show graphic scenes and that
13 people who are uncomfortable with that,
14 this presentation may last -- I don't
15 know how long the witness believes it
16 may last, but I think it's important to
17 let people know so that they're not
18 further hurt by this presentation and we
19 can focus on the main issue before us.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Duly noted
21 and actually empathetic.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: How long is
24 this presentation?

25 MR. GARVEY: It's probably

1 going to last about maybe one more
2 minute. I have a paragraph or so, sir.
3 And then hopefully, we can get in
4 questions and I will turn this off or I
5 can turn it off now if you would like.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Well, I'm
7 going to err on the side of turning it
8 off, and we can just -- people have been
9 victimized once by the crime, twice by
10 the cleanup, three times by the trial
11 and we don't want to continue that
12 process. So why don't we go to Q&A if
13 it's okay -- or if you can verbally
14 finish your testimony.

15 MR. GARVEY: I can absolutely,
16 sir. We were at the point of basically
17 showing where -- there's often primary
18 scene and then there's often the other
19 scenes where people's cars, homes that
20 aren't at the primary scene also get
21 struck. When we look at this, the
22 Philadelphia Police don't have the
23 resources or personnel right now for our
24 cleanups nor do we have a list of
25 contractors who we can tell people who

1 they should actually reach out to.

2 However, what we can say, we
3 fully agree that based on the scenes
4 that we see, we absolutely know there is
5 a need for these services. People need
6 these services, need the contact points,
7 need the capability to clean up. And
8 with the surge in gun violence, many
9 more people will continue to face this
10 extreme burden to require their property
11 to be cleaned but also disinfected in a
12 healthy and safe way. And anything that
13 we can do talking about this hearing,
14 whether it's providing these services,
15 providing the possibility to pay for
16 these will help these people who are
17 dealing with crime every single day.

18 This was not part of my written
19 testimony. However, after hearing the
20 earlier people, I have to add on, sir,
21 that the concept of training I think is
22 a great one. Hearing the possibility to
23 do more training for our crime scene
24 officers and other officers who will be
25 interacting with anyone, to have them

1 better prepared for how to deal with
2 people, talk to them about what the
3 scene may look like, to walk someone
4 back into that scene, to talk to that
5 person in a calm way or possibly to help
6 prevent them from not having to go back
7 into that scene, I think the training
8 option that was talked about was an
9 excellent idea and I'm going to be
10 taking that option back to our office
11 and basically that is something that we
12 should be able to work on pretty
13 quickly, sir. And with that, I will end
14 for questions. Sorry about the graphic
15 nature of that. But it was critical to
16 show so many people that don't realize
17 what crime scenes look like and what it
18 looks like after we leave. And that is
19 the reality that so many people have to
20 deal with after we're finished
21 processing. We leave and they're left
22 to clean up. If there are any
23 questions.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
25 for your testimony. A couple of things:

1 One, how many indoor crime scenes did
2 you deal with annually last year 2020,
3 but how many do you deal with outside?

4 MR. GARVEY: That's a hard
5 question for me to give you an answer to
6 right now. I can check. We typically
7 don't track crime scenes, whether
8 they're inside or whether they are in
9 the public space. I can try to pull
10 basically to count. We also have a mix
11 of scenes that will be both. They may
12 start inside and move outside. They may
13 start outside and move inside. But if
14 we look at it, 499 homicides and over
15 2,000 other gun violence scenes. That's
16 a lot of scenes, but I can't answer the
17 questions on which ones were outside and
18 which ones were --

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Let's assume
20 outside. What is your process after
21 gathering evidence as you cited in the
22 presentation, and then at what point do
23 you do cleanup?

24 MR. GARVEY: So there is no
25 cleanup process for the PPD. That is

1 not part of the PPD's process. Once we
2 process a scene, it is to only collect
3 the evidence that needs to be brought
4 back in to be tested. Anything else is
5 left in place. Sometimes when it's an
6 outside scene, we'll call the fire folks
7 in to hose it off. But there is no
8 policy within PPD or any other place
9 here for crime scene cleanup. That like
10 we've heard over and over again falls on
11 the people who are responsible for the
12 property.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: So if I'm in
14 a playground and there's a homicide,
15 what happens then?

16 MR. GARVEY: We would basically
17 process the scene. PPD, once we are
18 finished with it, would turn that scene
19 back over to Parks & Rec and they would
20 be the ones that would be cleaning it up
21 after.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: So they
23 don't use a professional cleanup crew?

24 MR. GARVEY: That I do not
25 know, sir.

1 COUNCILMAN JONES: Do you --
2 all right. In the case of -- so at a
3 teddy bear memorial on the street, there
4 might be blood, there might be other
5 tissue matter that is associated with
6 the gun shot, we just kind of hose it
7 down and keep it moving?

8 MR. GARVEY: There's no program
9 within PPD or any other place that pays
10 or has the resources for crime scene
11 cleanup. It is a critical problem area,
12 yes, sir.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
14 I appreciate the candor. And so, you
15 don't have stats right now on how many
16 times -- so I assume if there were 499
17 homicides, there were 499 crime scenes?

18 MR. GARVEY: Yes, sir. So
19 every homicide obviously has a scene.
20 And then all of the nonfatal shootings,
21 they all have crime scenes also. So
22 every year we probably are at between
23 2,000 and 3,000 scenes.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
25 Are there any questions from members of

1 the Committee?

2 COUNCILWOMAN GYM:

3 Mr. Chairman, this is Councilmember Gym.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Chair

5 recognizes Councilmember Gym.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
7 very much. First of all, I just want to
8 thank Mr. Garvey for the comments and
9 certainly appreciate the work that the
10 Philadelphia Police Department does. I
11 think anybody who knows the amount of
12 harm that's been done across our City
13 regarding violence, but our police, our
14 first responders, they witness these
15 scenes uncleaned up in any aspect. And
16 I hope it underscores for all of us the
17 importance for providing expanding and
18 expansive mental health supports,
19 treatments, mandatory trauma training to
20 help people deal with the violence that
21 they have to witness, and just an
22 underscoring yet again that violence
23 impacts people on a wide scale.

24 And again, I appreciate the
25 communication of the severity of what we

1 leave families and the broader public to
2 deal with. I just feel like it's
3 important for us to warn people before
4 we see these scenes and again to use
5 them judiciously, because I think we
6 want to focus in on what we need to do.

7 So my question is -- if you had
8 a chance to listen to some of the
9 earlier testimony, some of the concerns,
10 and I know as a member of the Department
11 you're advocating for an expansion. Are
12 there other recommendations that have
13 kind of resonated with you in terms of
14 how we can expand the state's
15 responsibility to make sure that the
16 Crime Victims Compensation Fund is more
17 fully expansive and does include
18 concerns around crime scene cleanup?
19 Were there other recommendations that
20 resonated that you feel like we ought to
21 be emphasizing?

22 MR. GARVEY: Sure. Yes.
23 Absolutely. Many of the items really
24 truly hit home. The idea that we can do
25 a better job talking to the victims,

1 talking to the people, sharing the
2 information that is out there in a
3 compassionate way, that goes directly to
4 us probably clarifying protocols, but it
5 also goes to training. So the topic of
6 training I think is an incredible one.
7 One, which we are already doing training
8 in many areas to make sure that we are
9 going to engage better with those that
10 we serve. So the training piece is
11 critical.

12 Having us have a list perhaps
13 that is vetted by the City that we would
14 be able to provide, because right now we
15 can't provide names of a company because
16 we can't favor one company versus some
17 other company. However, if there was an
18 approved list by the City like you
19 already heard earlier like the tow
20 trucks, then perhaps we would even be
21 able to provide that. If there was a
22 way for these people to not have to do
23 the cleanup, to not have to go in and
24 plan that cleanup talking to a private
25 company, of course that would be a great

1 option too.

2 Obviously, many of these things
3 while they don't fall into the PPD's
4 sort of what's our processing, we
5 absolutely realize the trauma that
6 looking at a crime scene can have on a
7 person. I have to routinely look at my
8 crime scene team and actually think
9 about the number of scenes they go to
10 even in one night, the number of scenes
11 they go to in a week, the number of
12 scenes that they go to over the course
13 of a year and the trauma that gives
14 them. But in the same token, someone
15 who lost a son, child of any kind,
16 that's adding on to that trauma. So
17 anything that we can actually do to help
18 that process, we should.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. Thank
20 you very much, Mr. Chair.

21 Thank you very much,
22 Mr. Garvey.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
24 Member Gym.

25 So what I would like to do is

1 allow you to kind of put together
2 recommendations, and I don't know if it
3 should be housed in the Police
4 Department, whether it should be housed
5 in the Health Department, whether it's
6 something that members of the morgue or
7 people who pick up bodies should do, but
8 that should be standardized and not just
9 left to happenstance. I dread teddy
10 bear memorials, but I dread the fact
11 that we haven't cleaned up some of the
12 residue of a murder. And so, that
13 concerns me.

14 My question also is,
15 increasingly victims of homicide, the
16 scene happens to be a car now. People
17 pull up and they catch people off guard
18 while they're behind the wheel. What
19 happens when that happens to the vehicle
20 and then the processing?

21 MR. GARVEY: Yes, sir. So one,
22 just for your first actual comment, I
23 would agree with you, Public Health I
24 think should be part of this process.
25 We really should be looking at crime

1 scene cleanup well beyond just hosing
2 things off. This is truly cleaning,
3 disinfecting. So I think that would
4 arguably go into the realm of at least
5 talking to Public Health to make sure
6 that process happens properly.

7 Moving into your question about
8 cars, cars much like any other scene
9 will be processed. Evidence will be
10 collected from those cars, and at some
11 point someone can reclaim that car.
12 Unfortunately, when they reclaim that
13 car, that car will not have been cleaned
14 so it would require cleaning, it would
15 require possibly changing out parts of
16 the car, because often those cars were
17 struck by bullet after bullet after
18 bullet, so those would all be part of
19 the cleanup process which we do not have
20 any procedures for nor the resources
21 for.

22 We also look at crime scene
23 cleanup for every Philadelphia car, for
24 every police car. When our officers
25 respond to a scene, they will often

1 scoop and run hundreds of people in our
2 City because we will pick up a victim
3 and mainly because we are so close to so
4 many great quality hospitals. We can
5 scoop up a person, get them into the
6 backseat of our car and quickly
7 transport them to hopefully save a life.
8 Every time we do that we also have to
9 look at actually cleaning, disinfecting
10 the back of our cars.

11 There is a contract for that,
12 which I believe and I could be wrong on
13 the exact number, but I believe it's
14 about \$400 to \$500 every time we have to
15 clean a car. That process is very
16 time-consuming. The car is taken out of
17 service. It has to be cleaned by the
18 contractor because we don't have the
19 people qualified to actually do it. So
20 that's basically how we process cars.
21 Hopefully, that answered your question,
22 sir.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes, it did.
24 In addition, can you send over the specs
25 or qualifications you use to determine a

1 cleaner for the City?

2 MR. GARVEY: I can talk to the
3 people that manage the contract and I
4 can pull that information for you, yes,
5 sir.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
7 very much.

8 Any other questions for this
9 witness?

10 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

11 Mr. Chair, I have a question.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Member
13 Gauthier recognized.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good
15 morning, Mr. Garvey.

16 MR. GARVEY: Good morning,
17 Councilmember.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: It
19 strikes me that this issue of crime
20 scene cleanup and how it's dealt with
21 fits into a broader issue of the support
22 and care that were given to people in
23 the hours right after a homicide when
24 they're in extreme distress. I wanted
25 to know if you could describe for us

1 what that support looks like.

2 I realize that not all of this
3 will fall on PPD, right. We can be
4 talking about mental health. We can be
5 talking about violence interruption,
6 right, in warding off retaliatory
7 shooting. But I think it's important
8 for us to know if there is a
9 comprehensive response in the hours
10 after a shooting. And I ask this
11 question having visited the scenes of
12 homicides in my District and feeling
13 like there wasn't a comprehensive
14 response. While I saw police there very
15 diligently doing their work and
16 processing the scene, I also saw family
17 members and neighbors just in extreme
18 crisis and there seemed to be nothing
19 there to deal with that.

20 So I wanted for you to describe
21 that more clearly, what happens now and
22 how do we treat that as a City. And I
23 also wanted to hear your thoughts on
24 what it should look like, what should
25 that response in the hours after a

1 homicide look like if we're acting in a
2 caring and compassionate way for people
3 in our neighborhoods?

4 MR. GARVEY: Absolutely. Great
5 question, complicated question. But
6 basically during the processing of a
7 scene, the primary basic job at that
8 point is to process the scene, figure
9 out the evidence, collect the evidence,
10 capture that, ask questions and that is
11 what you're seeing. That flurry, right,
12 that you were talking about going on is
13 focusing on that small window of time
14 where we can preserve the evidence,
15 capture as much information as possible
16 to hopefully get enough evidence to
17 close that case, to be able to solve
18 that case to hopefully prevent the next
19 crime.

20 So while that answer touches on
21 what we do for crime solving which is
22 the general job of the PPD, the next
23 part of that question, right, is what do
24 we do for the people that are left at
25 the scene. And right now that would be

1 a comprehensive look at how the City is
2 basically looking at what are the
3 services for those people. Quite often
4 those services probably come the next
5 day or days later as the right agencies
6 are called and people are actually
7 reached out to.

8 I don't know of a program so I
9 don't want to say there isn't one. But
10 I don't know of a program right now
11 where we would send someone out. And
12 when I say we, I'm not just talking
13 about the PPD, I'm talking about all of
14 us, we send out anyone, Public Health or
15 a counselor at the moment of the crime
16 scene. That's usually after the fact.
17 And perhaps in the same way that we
18 talked about now when a call comes out
19 or someone is in crisis to not only send
20 an officer, but to send someone else,
21 right, that can help deal with that
22 crisis, that may be something to perhaps
23 look at some point what could be done
24 for the victims closer to the point of
25 trauma. But right now, that typically

1 occurs later on with, you know, saying
2 these are the resources you can reach
3 out to.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
5 you. I just wanted to identify that as
6 a gap and I'm hopeful that we can come
7 up with a better more immediate response
8 for people who are just having the worst
9 moment of their lives and need a higher
10 level of support than what we're able to
11 do when just focused on the crime scene
12 cleanup. And I'm making that comment
13 with the full knowledge that this is a
14 collective issue, not just the issue of
15 the PPD.

16 MR. GARVEY: Yes, ma'am.

17 MS. CHRISTIAN: Councilman
18 Jones, if I could have permission to
19 speak with respect to the Councilwoman's
20 question.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Can you
22 state your name again for the record.

23 MS. CHRISTIAN: Yes. My name
24 is Lisa Christian. I am the Director of
25 Community Services at Anti-Violence

1 Partnership of Philadelphia.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Please
3 proceed.

4 MS. CHRISTIAN: In response to
5 your question, Councilwoman, there is a
6 program that comes out in the aftermath
7 of homicide once they are informed of a
8 homicide, and that is the Philadelphia
9 CARES program and that is the Crisis
10 Assistance Response and Engagement for
11 Survivors. That is a program through
12 the District Attorney's Office and the
13 Medical Examiner's Office.

14 And the Director of the
15 program, Myra Maxwell, what she does is
16 she dispatches what is called peer
17 crisis responders to either the scene or
18 since we're under the COVID
19 restrictions, that usually happens maybe
20 a day or two or sometimes three days
21 after a homicide has occurred. And that
22 program, those responders, go out to the
23 homes, to the hospitals, anywhere in the
24 community where that homicide has
25 occurred to provide direct crisis

1 response services to families impacted
2 by homicide. I just wanted to make you
3 all aware of that.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
5 you. I'm aware of that program and I
6 didn't mean to disparage the great work
7 the DAO is doing. They helped many of
8 my constituents. My question was more
9 so focused on the immediate sort of
10 aftermath of a homicide and making sure
11 that we're doing all we can at the
12 scene, right, for the co-victims and for
13 the neighbors. And many times these
14 neighbors are living in areas where
15 they're barraged by shootings, right.
16 And so, I think the CARES program is
17 great. And I'm more so talking about
18 right on the spot what's happening to
19 comfort people and to treat their
20 trauma.

21 MS. CHRISTIAN: Yes, ma'am.
22 Thank you.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
24 Member Gauthier. Does that conclude
25 your questions?

1 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: (Nodded
2 affirmatively).

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are there
4 any other questions for this witness?

5 (No response.)

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Seeing none,
7 thank you so much for your testimony.
8 We look forward to your follow-up and
9 please provide that to the Chair, and I
10 will forward that to the rest of the
11 Committee.

12 Samantha, who do we have next?

13 THE CLERK: The next panel is
14 Anntwinete Dupree, Trina Singleton and
15 Jeanette Barnes.

16 MS. DUPREE: Good morning,
17 everyone. My name is Anntwinete Dupree.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good
19 morning.

20 MS. DUPREE: Good morning. My
21 name is Anntwinete Dupree Hart. I'm the
22 niece of Florence Pompey and Raymond
23 Finney. They were siblings that were
24 murdered at 5:06 a.m. on Saturday, May
25 27, 2017. I was the last person who

1 loved them to see them alive and I was
2 one of the people who discovered their
3 bodies in their home on Sunday, May 28,
4 2017.

5 The Police Department was
6 successful in apprehending the murderer
7 and we, unlike many other families, have
8 a sense of justice. My family will be
9 forever grateful to PPD and the District
10 Attorney's Office. Naturally, when we
11 discovered my aunt and uncle, it was
12 extremely devastating. They were the
13 youngest son and daughter of a very
14 large and loving family.

15 My aunt was found with her body
16 pressed against the wall by the window.
17 She may have tried to escape. She was
18 shot at close range in the head. My
19 uncle was taken by surprise and he was
20 shot in his head, stomach and chest in
21 the upstairs hallway. Both scenes were
22 gruesome, and there's not a day that
23 goes by that I don't relive this
24 nightmare.

25 The police went about their

1 business of processing the crime scene.
2 They did their job. When they were
3 done, the police informed us that we
4 were okay to go into the house. I'm the
5 oldest niece and I was designated as the
6 person responsible for making all
7 funeral arrangements. I was forewarned
8 that the police only took care of what
9 was necessary to collect evidence and
10 process the scene, and that there was
11 not cleanup.

12 My uncle Reggie, the victim's
13 brother, volunteered to go in and clean
14 up so that I could look for the
15 insurance documents and clothes for my
16 aunt and uncle's funeral arrangements.
17 I drove him there and waited in the car.
18 He spent close to two hours cleaning and
19 afterwards told me it was okay to go
20 into the house. He said he would wait
21 in the car for me until I was done, so I
22 went in and did the job of picking out
23 clothes and looking for the documents.
24 My uncle did an amazing job. He took
25 the time and the care needed to protect

1 me from seeing what he actually saw.
2 When I came back out, my uncle was gone.
3 We didn't see him again until the day of
4 my aunt's funeral five days later.

5 A note about my uncle who
6 undertook the task of cleaning up behind
7 his brother and sister's murder: They
8 were a family of nine siblings. My
9 Uncle Raymond was the youngest boy and
10 my Aunt Tina, Florence, was the youngest
11 girl, but my uncle Reggie was between
12 the two so he had just lost his
13 bookings. Also, Uncle Reggie is a
14 recovering drug addict. He was clean
15 for four years before this happened.
16 He's quiet and kind and a gentle soul.
17 But he was clean before he had gone in
18 that house.

19 Since the day he had to clean
20 his sister's blood and brain matter off
21 the walls and scrub his baby brother's
22 blood out the carpet, my uncle has not
23 been able to stay sober. He has been to
24 rehab, but it just does not stick. Our
25 family has suffered a loss, all of us.

1 The crime was devastating
2 because of the nature of it and also the
3 perpetrator was my Uncle Raymond's son.
4 But Uncle Reggie has suffered the most.
5 He once said that he couldn't get over
6 going in that house and scraping parts
7 of his sister off the walls and
8 scrubbing his brother away. His eyes
9 have seen things that his mind just
10 can't unsee. Murder scene cleanup is
11 something that no family should have to
12 contemplate at a time when their life is
13 basically shattered.

14 In our family's case, we didn't
15 know what to expect and we needed to get
16 into that house quickly because my
17 uncle's religion requires that he be
18 buried in a tight timeline. We were
19 shell-shocked and we did not know what
20 to ask. We had to cover funeral
21 expenses because my uncle was uninsured,
22 so we did that and that was fine. But
23 the expense of a cleanup would have been
24 taxing and stressful. Not to mention
25 the idea, as someone mentioned before,

1 of Googling crime scene cleanup
2 companies still shakes me to my core.

3 It's really important that this
4 resolution be passed. No family is
5 emotionally prepared to clean up a
6 murder scene, not one. All families are
7 not in the financial position to cover
8 the upfront costs of a crime scene
9 cleanup. While the \$500 grant to
10 reimburse the cleanup is great, it's not
11 practical to all families who may be
12 struggling to cover the expense of an
13 unplanned funeral or as in my family's
14 case, two funerals. The traumatizing
15 effect of doing this is long-term. It's
16 been four years and my uncle is still
17 struggling. I apologize. I thank you
18 for your time and consideration.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: First, thank
20 you for sharing that testimony and we
21 still apologize for your loss. But it
22 was very important for us to hear not
23 the statistics, not just the cost
24 factor, but the cost in human and
25 emotional capital that goes along with

1 this. And so, this is very important
2 for people unfortunately that will have
3 to go through what you went through and
4 what your family had to go through and
5 we salute your courage for stepping up
6 as a pillar in your family to deal with
7 those hard decisions that come after
8 those kinds of losses, so thank you.
9 Thank you so very much.

10 MS. DUPREE: Thank you.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are there
12 any questions?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Hearing
15 none, thank you for your testimony.

16 THE CLERK: Trina Singleton.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES:
18 Ms. Singleton.

19 MS. SINGLETON: Yes, I'm here.
20 One moment, please.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: No problem.
22 Thank you for your patience.

23 MS. SINGLETON: Give me one
24 second.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Take your

1 time.

2 MS. SINGLETON: Good morning.

3 Thank you for your patience.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good
5 morning.

6 MS. SINGLETON: Thank you so
7 much for allowing me to participate
8 today. My name is Trina Singleton and
9 my son is Darryl Singleton. He was
10 murdered on September 13, 2016. The
11 process for us was very confusing
12 because he was murdered in the back of
13 our home, like in the driveway area, so
14 the police did not tape off any part of
15 the crime scene and they did not tell us
16 whether we should clean it or we
17 shouldn't clean it or should we touch
18 it. We didn't know what we were
19 supposed to do with that scene. And so,
20 somebody in our family hosed it down.

21 So the same night that it
22 happened, I'm guessing before the police
23 even were able to get anything from the
24 scene, somebody had hosed it down. And
25 so, then we wound up going there the

1 next day and my husband was able to find
2 bullets and things and just stuff, but
3 we had compromised the scene because we
4 washed it and nobody told us what to do.
5 So we didn't know where to go. We
6 didn't know who to talk to. We never
7 got any information about how we handled
8 it or how it should have been handled.
9 The information that we wound up finally
10 getting to help us was from the
11 Coroner's office.

12 We sent a family member to
13 identify the body and they came back
14 with a white envelope. And then I
15 opened it and so that's how I even found
16 out about counseling for the family and
17 things -- so if I wasn't in a state of
18 mind to look at that information, we
19 would have just been floundering around,
20 trying to figure out what to do. Me and
21 my husband, we were lost. So I want to
22 say thankfully there was that envelope
23 full of information. But I know from my
24 experience with other parents who are in
25 a similar situation, everybody doesn't

1 open that. Everybody doesn't read that
2 information. So a lot of time we are
3 left in a trauma situation with nowhere
4 to go, with no one, you know, to do it.
5 And again, I think it's just really a
6 cold situation where I'm just hosing
7 down body matter from my deceased child
8 and that's that. That's that. No wrap-
9 up, no encapsulation, no process or plan
10 to help.

11 So I'm glad that you guys are
12 having this meeting. I think that it
13 will help humanize the fact that we are
14 losing our children. It's just so
15 inhumane the way that the homicide is
16 handled once it does happen. So I thank
17 you very much for hearing me and I hope
18 that this will help some other families
19 in the future to have a different
20 experience. Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
22 for your courage and we apologize for
23 your loss, and nobody should on their
24 worst day have to deal with those kinds
25 of issues. And what disturbs me from

1 your testimony is that you didn't know
2 what to do with the crime scene and how
3 it should be treated and then how it
4 should be cleaned, and we have to get
5 better as a City.

6 I'm not pointing fingers at the
7 departments, but pointing to solutions
8 to be able to get that envelope not only
9 of services that can be provided but
10 here's the responsibility of a crime
11 scene, what are our responsibilities,
12 what are your responsibilities and
13 clearly who's responsible for what
14 portion of it. So thank you for your
15 testimony.

16 Are there any questions for
17 this witness?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Hearing
20 none, Samantha, can you call the next
21 person to testify.

22 THE CLERK: Is Jeanette Barnes
23 present?

24 (No response.)

25 THE CLERK: Okay. Councilman,

1 I think we can move on to the next
2 panel. So I will call up Renee Norris
3 Jones and Brett Roman Williams and
4 Esther Mander who may need to be called
5 in.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.
7 Are my witnesses there? Please take
8 your device off mute and let me know
9 you're there.

10 MR. WILLIAMS: Bret Williams is
11 here, Councilman Jones.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: How are you?

13 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm well. Thank
14 you.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
16 for your patience. State your name for
17 the record and please begin your
18 testimony.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hello --

20 MR. WILLIAMS: I want to make
21 sure I follow the order, Councilman
22 Jones. I was second on the list.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. So
24 who should go first, Sam.

25 THE CLERK: Renee, if she's

1 able to unmute --

2 MS. NORRIS JONES: Yes.

3 Renee's here. Yes.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. State
5 your name for the record. Thank you for
6 your patience and please begin your
7 testimony.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: This
9 is --

10 MS. NORRIS JONES: Yes. My
11 name's Renee Norris --

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Go ahead.

13 MS. NORRIS JONES: I'm sorry.
14 I'm hearing other voices in here. This
15 is Renee Norris Jones. My sister
16 Patricia Norris was murdered in 1999.
17 It was a domestic violence incident. It
18 was a murder-suicide. We found out
19 about it and the family came together.
20 I'm a survivor of domestic violence so
21 I'm trying to piece together the pieces
22 in my head.

23 So we knew about it and we
24 found out that it happened. It was on
25 the news, and the family came together

1 to plan the funeral. I knew that there
2 was a viewing at the morgue and it was a
3 video at the morgue -- well, not a
4 video. It was just a picture of her
5 face. And we did that and then we went
6 back to my father's house at the same
7 time, and we were trying to determine if
8 she had life insurance, where was her
9 purse, where were her belongings, kind
10 of what was going on. She was actually
11 at the house and she was staying at a
12 domestic shelter.

13 And she met, at my father's
14 insistence, my father and her husband at
15 the house. And within five minutes, he
16 shot her point-blank and then shot
17 himself. So we knew this much had
18 happened. So while we're at my dad's
19 house, we didn't have a purse or
20 anything. And so, my sister and I
21 decided we were going to go up to the
22 house and look and see whether a purse
23 was there.

24 The house was a rental so it
25 was completely empty because the

1 previous tenants had moved out, so we
2 went in the house. We didn't see
3 anything in the living room, dining
4 room. My sister said, I'll go upstairs.
5 And I said, I'll go down to the
6 basement. And I remember getting down
7 to the basement. As I entered the
8 basement floor and turned to go into the
9 basement, I just remembered just
10 gasping. And I must have gasped loud
11 enough for my sister on the second floor
12 to hear me and come running. And I was
13 saying to her, don't come, don't come,
14 don't come because she was shot point-
15 blank in the head up against the wall.
16 So I witnessed brain matter, spine
17 matter, floor, everything. And my
18 sister, because typically if you tell
19 someone don't come after you scream,
20 they're going to come anyway and she had
21 the same reaction.

22 As someone who is a survivor of
23 domestic violence probably for the same
24 amount of period that my sister was, my
25 ex-husband, so this was very especially

1 traumatizing to me because my ex-husband
2 was arrested in 1986 for bludgeoning his
3 mother to death with an ax, so I already
4 had trauma with me. Needless to say,
5 this was traumatizing to myself, my
6 sister who was a survivor.

7 I'm currently an advocate for
8 domestic violence. I am -- Women
9 Against Abuse got me to safety in 1979.
10 They got me 1600 miles away for safety
11 so this brought back all of that. I
12 currently sit on the Board of Directors
13 at Women Against Abuse to help other
14 women, but I have to limit my testimony
15 because it triggers me, but this was
16 important enough for me to speak out,
17 know that I have therapy tomorrow to
18 help me through this. But it was
19 important enough for me to speak out and
20 risk being retriggered.

21 As I'm listening to the
22 testimony, I did not know that there
23 were people who came and cleaned that
24 up. Our reaction was, my God, I've
25 never been at a crime scene before. I

1 would think that they cleaned this up.
2 This is the thought in my head. I did
3 not know -- meanwhile you're trying to
4 look away. I did not know what to do at
5 that point. I don't even remember
6 leaving the house. I remember my sister
7 and I standing there crying. I don't
8 remember going upstairs. I don't
9 remember leaving. But I remember at
10 that point we just stood there for a
11 really long time crying.

12 What I was confused as kind of
13 the hours and the days went on, going
14 how come someone didn't clean this up.
15 I did not know that they didn't clean up
16 crime scenes and people are walking into
17 this. So I'm hearing other people
18 testify and I'm going, totally agree.
19 How can you let someone walk into this
20 or at least not let them know that this
21 is what they're going to walk into.
22 Maybe I watch too many police things on
23 TV where you don't see that, but it was
24 to this day traumatizing. Unless
25 someone has a question, that's pretty

1 much what I have right now that I can
2 share.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
4 for putting this on the record. And
5 thank you for your strength to be able
6 to recount what happened and hopefully,
7 this sacrifice you're making today will
8 help other people avoid that trauma.
9 And so, I thank you.

10 MS. NORRIS JONES: Absolutely.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: And we
12 appreciate what you do for the
13 organization and for others. So
14 hopefully, you will find the peace you
15 need.

16 MS. NORRIS JONES: Thank you.
17 And I just want to say thank you guys
18 for making this happen because it's here
19 that the change happens. So it's an
20 honor to be here and thank you guys for
21 doing this.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GYM:
23 Councilmember Jones.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes. Member
25 Gym.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you.

2 I also want to thank Dr. Norris Jones,
3 all the testifiers for having the
4 courage to share what you shared today.

5 And, Dr. Norris Jones, for the work that
6 you do, the continued work that you do
7 to come out of pain and trauma and

8 terror honestly, to bring other women to
9 safety just cannot be underscored. And

10 so, you have our incredible gratitude,

11 and that is to all the testifiers who

12 are on there today. It's not lost on us

13 that many of the testifiers are also

14 women, and we're very thoughtful and

15 grateful and attended to this issue.

16 Thank you.

17 MS. NORRIS JONES: Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,

19 Member Gym. And thank you for your

20 testimony.

21 Samantha, who's next?

22 MS. MANDER: My name is Esther

23 Mander.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Ms. Mander.

25 Thank you. Please begin your testimony.

1 MS. MANDER: My sister was the
2 one who had succumbed to domestic
3 violence as well. It was her own
4 nephew, my nephew who did it. But what
5 I wanted the Council to keep in mind was
6 that the blood is our life force. We're
7 already grieving. We missed the words
8 that were spoken by our loved ones. We
9 miss their presence, their smile, their
10 encouragement. The meaning behind each
11 of those words, the things we did
12 together, whether it was planning a
13 meal, preparing a meal, having a picnic
14 or whatever, it's all gone so we're
15 already grieving.

16 And the young lady just said,
17 we walk into the house to plan the
18 funeral and there's blood all over, from
19 the kitchen, through the hall, up the
20 steps and down the hall towards the
21 bedroom where she actually collapsed.
22 But my son and I were the ones who got
23 in and had to clean up the blood. It's
24 very, very hard to do so. You're
25 already crying. You're already upset,

1 grieving, mad, and still not to
2 understand why, so there's a million
3 things that go through mind and as you
4 change the water to get the rest of the
5 blood up or in some cases the dura
6 matter, the brains are all over, no one
7 should have to go through that. And if
8 it's possible to start this task force
9 for the cleanup so the families and the
10 individuals do not have to live through
11 that, that would be absolutely
12 wonderful.

13 It's hard enough, like you
14 said, to make the plans and figure out
15 insurances and funeral homes and
16 ministers and all that kind of stuff and
17 have to clean the blood up as well.
18 It's very, very hard, very tearing. So
19 like the young lady was saying, this is
20 where we start at ground roots level --
21 grassroots level, I'm sorry, ground
22 floor, and make sure that each one
23 understands that's a very hard thing to
24 do.

25 It has to be done before

1 everyone else starts coming in with
2 their ideas and their ministries and
3 prayers and everything. That has to be
4 cleaned up before there can be any kind
5 of a meeting. And it's a little much to
6 ask the family members to do so
7 immediately. So I too appreciate the
8 opportunity given me to let you know it
9 doesn't -- we're not all cold. I'm a
10 nurse and I've seen lots of people die
11 over 42 years of nursing. Some were GI
12 bleeders, but it's still not the same
13 type of thing. It's someone that you're
14 close to or closer to than a patient.
15 If we could possibly get that going, I
16 would certainly be the one to say yes,
17 yes, I'm all for it. So thank you again
18 for allowing me these few minutes to
19 speak to you.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
21 for your testimony and adding your voice
22 to the chorus of voices who have had to
23 go through this. And it does matter.
24 It adds to why we need to do something
25 to spare people this pain. Thank you so

1 much for your testimony.

2 Samantha.

3 MS. MANDER: You're welcome.

4 THE CLERK: Brett Roman
5 Williams.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES:

7 Mr. Williams. Maybe your microphone's
8 on mute. Mr. Williams.

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Who's next,
11 Samantha?

12 THE CLERK: He was our last
13 witness. He had his camera on prior to
14 the last witness's testimony. It looks
15 like he may have --

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: I thought I
17 saw him. Well, if that's the last
18 witness, are there any others to testify
19 on this resolution?

20 THE CLERK: It looks like
21 Mr. Williams is signed back in.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES:
23 Mr. Williams, are you there?

24 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes, I'm here.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: How are you?

1 MR. WILLIAMS: I'm well. Thank
2 you.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Can you
4 state your name for the record and begin
5 your testimony.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: Yes. My name is
7 Brett Roman Williams. I am Chairman of
8 the Board of Directors for the
9 Anti-Violence Partnership of
10 Philadelphia. I'm also a Philadelphia
11 native and also a co-victim of homicide.
12 My brother -- well, to start off, my
13 first cousin was murdered when I was 5
14 years old. In 1989 best friend was
15 murdered, and my father was murdered
16 when I was 11. And in 2016, my older
17 brother was murdered.

18 It's definitely an honor and an
19 unfortunate privilege, I should say, to
20 be here to speak before you,
21 Councilmember Jones, and other City
22 Councilmembers. I would like to thank
23 my colleagues at AVP for leading this
24 discussion. And also just bear with me,
25 I have my mask on because I'm in a

1 public location.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: That's okay.

3 MR. WILLIAMS: I will read my

4 notes real quick in terms of just

5 preparing for this hard statement.

6 Again, my name is Brett Roman Williams.

7 I am the Chairman of the Board of

8 Directors for the Anti-Violence

9 Partnership of Philadelphia.

10 While growing up in

11 Philadelphia, I've been experiencing the

12 trauma of gun violence since the age of

13 5. Unfortunately, I'm here today as a

14 result of my older brother Derrick

15 Williams, who was murdered five years

16 ago on October 27, 2016.

17 As news reported on that night,

18 my brother was a 52-year-old man

19 murdered execution style coming home

20 from a 76ers game home opener. To be

21 honest, the news article should have

22 said he was killed two doors away from

23 his home. I was with him at that game

24 until we departed and went our separate

25 ways. I remember receiving calls around

1 midnight, but I wasn't at the family's
2 house at the time. However, I rushed
3 over and my life changed forever.

4 I saw the cars lined up on our
5 street in West Oak Lane. I saw the
6 yellow tape. I saw the police and news
7 reporters. I saw the Dunkin' Donuts cup
8 that my brother was carrying when he was
9 murdered and it was left on the scene of
10 the crime. I saw my brother's blood on
11 the street. I took pictures. I have
12 the memories. I saw articles of my
13 brother's clothing on the crime scene.
14 He was wearing a down vest with
15 feathers, so I vividly remember seeing
16 the white feathers on the steps floating
17 in the blood the following morning.

18 I even picked up some of the
19 remains, such as buttons, drawstrings
20 because I knew it belonged to my brother
21 to hand over to the homicide detectives
22 the following day when they came. My
23 family was also given my brother's
24 clothes in a paper bag once they were
25 through with the investigation and

1 evidence. I was insulted and disgusted
2 by the sharing (inaudible) of the PPD.
3 Sorry.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: That's all
5 right.

6 MR. WILLIAMS: Through this
7 trauma, this case remains unsolved.
8 It's been five years. Now, keep in mind
9 we have two residences on the street
10 where my brother was murdered. One is
11 literally across the street from the
12 scene of the crime. The other is
13 literally two doors down where our
14 mother lives. Every day we go outside
15 we see that crime scene.

16 Now, I know the specifics and
17 particulars of crime scene cleanup
18 within the Victim Compensation has a
19 certain level of eligibility which
20 doesn't really pertain to crime scenes
21 outside. But as mentioned in this
22 hearing, many cases are on the street
23 and not in the homes. And that's why I
24 will never forget seeing my neighbor
25 spraying and scrubbing my brother's

1 blood off the street. And once the City
2 was called or attempted to clean the
3 scene, my neighbor had to experience
4 this on top of the trauma that my family
5 had to experience. It makes it
6 difficult for me to properly communicate
7 with my neighbor due to my recollection
8 of him cleaning my brother's blood. And
9 subconscious in my mind, I feel
10 obligated to his peace.

11 I would like to be clear about
12 how I found out about the Victims
13 Compensation Fund because Philadelphia
14 residents aren't aware of the Victims
15 Compensation Fund or the services that
16 are available to co-victims in terms of
17 receiving reimbursements that are
18 eligible. If I had not been the closest
19 of my brother's kin to identify him at
20 the Medical Examiner's Office, I would
21 not have been privy to any of this
22 information. I consider myself lucky to
23 be in this position and to have the
24 capacity to testify today.

25 Since I've been made aware and

1 have been entrenched in this work of
2 being an advocate of co-victims' rights,
3 I frequently ask my fellow Philadelphia
4 residents do they know of any of this
5 information. In most cases, many say
6 no. This must change. With the level
7 of violence and crime steadily
8 increasing in Philadelphia, this should
9 be highly publicized, distributed and
10 made very visible.

11 There needs to be a
12 comprehensive and trauma-informed system
13 and process that is easily accessible
14 and should be expanded. We need a
15 solution to this issue. The people of
16 Philadelphia should not be obligated to
17 seek this information. The burden
18 should not be on the people of
19 Philadelphia to clean up the remains of
20 any crime scene. The people of
21 Philadelphia should not have blood on
22 our hands. Thank you, Councilman Jones.
23 Thank you, City Council. And thank you
24 to my esteemed colleagues of the
25 Anti-Violence Partnership for leading

1 this initiative. Thank you.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
3 for sharing. Thank you for being a part
4 of the network that I got to meet and
5 meet with to learn your valuable
6 services you provide to the City of
7 Philadelphia.

8 Maria Holloway, a name nobody's
9 going to pretty much know about, her
10 name was Twin. And when I was 16 years
11 old, we were on our way to a party. We
12 shared an umbrella. She was shot in the
13 back of the head and killed. I was 16.
14 I don't talk about it a lot, but that
15 was done on Upland Way right around
16 56th. And I remember because it was
17 raining. And when she fell to the
18 ground, the crime scene was washed away
19 by the rain.

20 There's not a day I pass that
21 corner that I don't look to that scene
22 and that serves as a constant echo, a
23 constant reminder, a constant pebble in
24 a pond that we all as co-victims go
25 through. So the burden of cleaning that

1 scene shouldn't be left on the victims
2 again on their worst day.

3 Things that we will take away
4 from this hearing are that we need to
5 get further data from the Pennsylvania
6 Crime and Delinquency Committee about
7 Member Gym's inquiry as to why people
8 are rejected. It is as important as why
9 people received the funds, so that we
10 can close the gaps, help to smooth out
11 some of the regulations to do so.

12 Also, that we will work with
13 our state partners, lawmakers to take a
14 look at the statute to see if it's time
15 to increase the amount of reimbursement
16 from \$500 to more a reasonable
17 reimbursement of somewhere in the
18 neighborhood of \$2500 where the average
19 crime scene cleanup cost.

20 Another takeaway, and I'll
21 never forget, is that there are 48 zip
22 codes in the City of Philadelphia.
23 Eight of them produce the majority of
24 homicides in the City of Philadelphia
25 and maybe, just maybe, there should

1 be -- I'm not going to call it a
2 battlefield fund, but a fund that
3 addresses some of the high concentration
4 of homicides in that area and provides
5 special assistance for those zip codes
6 of which two of them are in the 4th
7 Councilmanic District.

8 These takeaways and more will
9 produce a white paper that will report
10 from this Committee and any Members that
11 want to give input to it, a draft of it
12 will be sent to the members of this
13 Committee and then finalized and
14 presented to the full body of Council
15 before the Mayor does his budget address
16 so that we can spare people from ever
17 having to be victimized, not once, not
18 twice, but three times by cleanup at a
19 crime scene.

20 Are there any other Members
21 that wish to give closing comments?

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Seeing none,
24 this concludes the business of the
25 Committee on Public Safety to deal with

1 today's resolution. Thank you all for
2 testifying and thank you all,
3 Councilmembers, for participating.
4 Thank you.

5 (Committee on Public Safety
6 concluded at 12:05 p.m.)

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

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 this is a correct transcript of the
same.

TANEHA C. CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of
this transcript does not apply to any
reproduction of the same by any means,
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supervision of the certifying reporter.)

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