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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Monday, April 17, 2023
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILMAN JIM HARRITY
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILWOMAN QUETCY M. LOZADA
COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS

RESOLUTION: 220985

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2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
3 morning. This is the Special
4 Committee on Gun Violence, Monday,
5 April 17th of 2023.

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

16 Instructions for how the
17 public may view and offer public
18 testimony and public hearings of
19 Council Committees are included in
20 the public hearing notices that are
21 published in the Daily News, Inquirer
22 and Legal Intelligencer prior to the
23 hearings. It can also be found on
24 PHLCouncil.com.

25 Will the Clerk please take the

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

8 THE CLERK: Councilmember
9 Jamie Gauthier.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good
11 morning, Mr. Chair and colleagues and
12 everybody watching. Present.

13 THE CLERK: Councilmember
14 Kendra Brooks.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Good
16 morning, Mr. Chair and colleagues.
17 I'm present.

18 THE CLERK: Councilmember
19 Curtis Jones, Jr.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
21 Mr. Chair. Good morning, members of
22 the Committee and viewing public.
23 I'm present.

24 THE CLERK: Councilmember Jim
25 Harrity.

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1 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Hello,
2 Councilmembers. Hello, family. I am
3 present.

4 THE CLERK: Councilmember
5 Quetcy Lozada.

6 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Good
7 morning, everyone. I am present.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
9 you. This hearing is now called to
10 order. This is the public hearing of
11 the Special Committee on Gun Violence
12 regarding Resolution 220985.

13 Will the Clerk please read the
14 title of the resolution.

15 THE CLERK: Resolution 220985,
16 resolution authorizing the Special
17 Committee on Gun Violence Prevention
18 to conduct a hearing to develop a
19 comprehensive approach to supporting
20 youth who are at risk of being
21 involved in or are currently involved
22 in gun violence.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Before we
24 begin to hear testimony from the
25 witnesses we have for today, everyone

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1 who has been invited to the meeting
2 to testify should be aware that this
3 public hearing is being recorded.

4 Because the hearing is public,
5 participants and viewers have no
6 reasonable expectation of privacy.

7 By continuing to being in the
8 meeting, you are considered to being
9 recorded.

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

21 At this particular time, I'm
22 going to call on Councilwoman Jamie
23 Gauthier who's the sponsor of this
24 resolution as we address the very
25 critical issue of gun violence

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1 amongst our young people here in the
2 City of Philadelphia.

3 Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
5 you, Mr. Chair. And good morning,
6 everyone. I want to speak for a few
7 minutes before we hear from the
8 expert witnesses.

9 Last September I spent several
10 hours in the emergency room at Penn
11 Presbyterian comforting Tiffany
12 Fletcher's family members. Tiffany
13 Fletcher worked at the Mill Creek
14 Recreation Center. While on duty,
15 she was tragically and senselessly
16 caught in the crossfire between two
17 rival groups of teenagers.

18 We hoped and prayed for good
19 news at the hospital that day, but
20 Tiffany did not survive her injuries.
21 As heartbroken as I was that terrible
22 day and continued to be, it is
23 nothing compared to the unimaginable
24 pain her family experiences each and
25 every day as do families who have an

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1 empty seat at the dinner table
2 because of gun violence.

3 This is just one of the many
4 tragedies involving school-aged
5 children in recent months. Stories
6 about incidents in Overbrook,
7 Roxborough, West Oak Lane and other
8 working-class Black and Brown
9 neighborhoods appear more and more
10 often in the news.

11 As a mother of two young Black
12 boys myself, I am deeply concerned by
13 the growing amount of youth becoming
14 entangled in the violence epidemic.
15 The number of shooting victims under
16 the age of 18 has steadily grown
17 since 2015 from 6.3 percent to 9.6
18 percent. At the same time, the
19 percentage of young people arrested
20 for gun violence tripled between 2017
21 and 2022.

22 What is happening here fits
23 into a very troubling national
24 landscape, adolescent mortality rose
25 in the United States by 20 percent

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1 between 2019 and 2021, the largest
2 increase in at least half a century.
3 And for the first time ever, the
4 number one cause of death for
5 children is gun violence.

6 This is a public health
7 emergency and every day of inaction
8 creates a lifetime of consequences.
9 Skeptics have asked me several times
10 why I am focusing today's hearing on
11 youth rather than young people in
12 their 20s, considering the median age
13 of someone arrested for gun violence
14 is 24 to 26.

15 Let me answer this question
16 directly: Almost every perpetrator
17 of gun violence had a touchpoint with
18 the government when they were under
19 the age of 18. The 100 Shootings
20 Report revealed that 3 in 4 shooters
21 had prior arrests. As many as 93
22 percent interacted with the criminal
23 justice system or a health and human
24 services agency. And on average,
25 this interaction occurred 11.5 years

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1 before the shooting occurred.

2 What do all these statistics
3 mean? It is troubling confirmation
4 that today's shooters were innocent
5 underserved kids who came to the City
6 in search of help and the City failed
7 them. So we are all here today
8 focused on youth specifically because
9 we cannot afford to abandon the next
10 generation of children too.

11 Today we will hear from a
12 broad cross-section of leaders and
13 City departments who work directly
14 with young people. I routinely hear
15 from parents that the City's youth
16 services system is complex and
17 siloed, making it challenging for the
18 community to understand how it all
19 fits together.

20 For this reason, my first goal
21 for today's hearing is to provide an
22 on-the-record bird's-eye view of how
23 distinct City agencies work or do not
24 work together to uplift our children.
25 And since we are in the midst of

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1 budget season, my hope is to uncover
2 as many legislative, programmatic and
3 financial solutions to the youth gun
4 violence crisis as possible.

5 We also need to know which
6 metrics we already have and what kind
7 of data we must collect to understand
8 which City programs focus on young
9 people and violence prevention work
10 as intended, which do not, and
11 identify remaining gaps. Only then
12 will we be able to speak with
13 confidence and make the changes
14 necessary to give young people and
15 their parents the support they need
16 to thrive.

17 I want to thank everyone who
18 is participating in and watching this
19 hearing. Thank you to the Kenney
20 Administration, the advocates who
21 fight passionately for our youth and
22 my Council colleagues, most
23 especially Committee Chairman
24 Kenyatta Johnson for his tireless
25 work to combat gun violence across

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1 South and Southwest Philly and the
2 City as a whole and to our Majority
3 Leader Curtis Jones for his work in
4 this area as well.

5 I also want to thank the young
6 people testifying this morning. If
7 nothing else, I hope today shows you
8 that we are listening, we want to be
9 a part of the solution and we love
10 you. It is the City's duty to
11 support young survivors of violence
12 and ensure all our children are safe
13 and have the resources they need to
14 succeed, because today's youth are
15 tomorrow's leaders. The future of
16 Philadelphia depends on us coming
17 together and boldly investing in the
18 well-being of our young people.
19 Thank you so much.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
21 very much.

22 Councilman Curtis Jones.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
24 so much, Mr. Chairman.

25 And special thanks to the

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1 author of this legislation, because
2 my colleague from the moment she
3 arrived in this office has elevated
4 the issue of gun violence along with
5 yourself, Mr. Chairman, to a priority
6 in the City of Philadelphia. I
7 remember when I first got here it was
8 not the case, and it was like the
9 100th thing on 100 things to do. But
10 it is now. If you look at the
11 candidates that are running for
12 Mayor, everyone is leading with that
13 issue.

14 And I'm so very grateful to
15 you, Mr. Chairman and to Jamie, for
16 elevating people to understand that
17 this is a crisis in the City of
18 Philadelphia along with members like
19 Katherine Gilmore Richardson and
20 others. We have sung a chorus that
21 people are beginning to hear.

22 So I'm excited about what
23 we're going to hear today to be
24 focused more on solutions and
25 recommendations as opposed to citing

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1 a problem that we all can see every
2 day on the news that there is one.
3 And I remember distinctly for the
4 young people being at the JJC with
5 you, Member, and looking at the faces
6 of those young people who need a
7 solution so that they can get off
8 that track.

9 You were successful finding
10 your way off that track, Member
11 Johnson. I was successful. Member
12 Harrity was successful in getting off
13 of that track. And we need to
14 provide as many expressways to
15 success as possible.

16 So thank you for that,
17 Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Member
18 Gauthier.

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
20 very much.

21 Any other Councilmembers for
22 brief comments before we get started?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Hearing
25 none, I want to thank you,

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1 Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier, for this
2 particular resolution. Because at
3 the end of the day, we have to all
4 collectively figure out how do we
5 support our young people. We're not
6 going to arrest our way out of this
7 situation, and it's better to invest
8 in our young people now as opposed to
9 in the long term.

10 And we know a lot of the
11 issues that they are dealing with
12 comes from years and years of not
13 only disinvestment but most
14 importantly being intentional around
15 wrapping our arms around them and
16 supporting them for the long haul.
17 And so, I thank you for organizing
18 this resolution and most important
19 the panelists who will be
20 participating. I look forward to
21 getting down to work.

22 With that being said, will the
23 Clerk please call the first --
24 Councilwoman Quetcy Lozada.

25 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank

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1 you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My
2 video isn't working. I'm having a
3 little bit of technical difficulties,
4 but I also wanted to say thank you to
5 you and Councilmember Gauthier for
6 this resolution as you guys know the
7 7th Council District really is
8 struggling with this.

9 Every day we turn around we're
10 losing a young person as a result of
11 gun violence. And as I knock on
12 doors on a daily basis, our mothers,
13 our fathers, our grandparents are
14 extremely concerned at the rate that
15 this has increased over the course of
16 the last few years.

17 And so, I am honored to be
18 able to stand by all of you who
19 understand how important this is to
20 our young people. We need to really
21 listen, sit back and listen to them.
22 Often times we don't include them in
23 the conversation. We think that we
24 are smarter than them and making the
25 decisions for what is best for them.

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1 And so, I'm glad that we are
2 here, that we are prepared to come
3 into this conversation with an open
4 mind and ready to come up with new
5 ideas that could potentially be led
6 by young people so that the buy-in is
7 greater and the outcomes are
8 different. Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
10 you.

11 Will the Clerk please call the
12 first panel.

13 THE CLERK: For the first
14 panel, we have Kevin Bethel followed
15 by Dr. Jayme Banks. And then after
16 them, we will have Kimberly Ali and
17 Gary Williams testifying together
18 followed by Dr. Ruth Abaya.

19 MR. BETHEL: Good morning,
20 Mr. Chair. Is that a go to start?

21 THE CLERK: Yes, sir.

22 MR. BETHEL: Okay. Good
23 morning --

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, you
25 can begin. Just state your name for

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1 the record and go ahead.

2 MR. BETHEL: Okay. Thank you,
3 Mr. Chair. My name is Kevin Bethel
4 and I currently serve as the Chief of
5 School Safety at the Philadelphia
6 School District. I formerly served
7 as a Deputy Commissioner for the
8 Philadelphia Police Department
9 retiring in 2016 after serving 29
10 years. First, I want to thank the
11 Council Chair and Councilwoman
12 Gauthier and all the Councilmembers
13 in attendance in the Committee for
14 the opportunity to speak today.

15 As someone who spent nearly 37
16 years in the public safety space,
17 it's an acceptable number of people
18 who have been shot and murdered, in
19 particularly as it relates to our
20 young people. The City of
21 Philadelphia has experienced a marked
22 increase in gun violence and far too
23 often with young people involved both
24 as victims and perpetrators.

25 And I heard what Councilmember

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1 Gauthier and talked about and I'm
2 going to pivot from my written
3 testimony just to share with you what
4 those numbers really look like. As a
5 School District, we capture all of
6 our young people, 22 and under,
7 because we have kids, young people,
8 into that age at our schools.

9 This school year alone we've
10 had 332 individuals under the age of
11 22 who have been shot. 448(sic) of
12 those have been shot have been under
13 the age of 18. And out of that
14 number, 107 of them have been active
15 students. We take that same number
16 332, we have 51 individuals under the
17 age of 22 have been murdered. 28 of
18 them have been under the age of 18,
19 and 21 of them school year have been
20 active students. And so, most of
21 these students have been shot in the
22 community. Unfortunately, we've had
23 a significant rise in violence
24 occurring around our schools.

25 And Councilwoman Gauthier

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1 mentioned a number of those schools
2 over the past two years we've watched
3 that violence come to the doorsteps
4 of our schools, resulting in not
5 just, you know, at least 2 students
6 shot directly outside of our schools,
7 but multiple students shot. And so,
8 my office captures all of the school-
9 aged students shot or killed and
10 provides that information to our
11 Student Support Team and Dr. Jayme
12 Banks, the Deputy Chief of Prevention
13 Intervention and Trauma.

14 Her team responds to the
15 schools, provides direct supports to
16 the family, students and staff.
17 Additionally, my School Safety Victim
18 Assistance Specialist also contacts
19 the families and provides advocacies
20 and referrals to our crucial
21 services. Superintendent Dr. Tony
22 Watlington has given me my office and
23 my charge to put forth the best
24 efforts to address the violence
25 impact in our students in our school

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1 community.

2 And to accomplish this task,
3 the Office of School Safety has
4 embarked on the following activities,
5 and I'll break them into two areas:
6 The first is really around the
7 physical components but then more
8 importantly, the work we are doing
9 with our young people in an effort to
10 as both of you in the openings,
11 Councilmembers in the opening,
12 indicated we have to make some
13 different changes.

14 We have a long-standing
15 partnership with the Philadelphia
16 Police Department. And I will say
17 this, we cannot be able to do the
18 work we're doing to keep our kids
19 safe particularly in and around our
20 schools without the support of the
21 Philadelphia Police Department.

22 Commissioner Outlaw and her
23 executive team, in particular
24 Commissioner Dales and most recently
25 Commissioner Kelly and their recent

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1 operations command teams have been a
2 significant partner in that work.
3 The police department will continue
4 their School Safety Zones Initiative.
5 The school safety zones provide
6 uniformed police officers present
7 during dismissal to support a safe
8 passage for our students moving
9 through those corridors. Apparently,
10 there's 26 zones that encompass 39
11 schools in some of our most
12 challenging communities.

13 We also have recently
14 established our Office of School
15 Safety Safe Path program, a program
16 that's run out of Chicago. It's a
17 collaboration between the District
18 and the Institute for Development of
19 African American Youth to provide
20 extra supervision and support for
21 students traveling to and from
22 schools to reduce the rate of
23 violence experienced by our students.

24 One of the key areas as we
25 shift away from, you know, moving

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1 into more external work interior to
2 the School District to dismantle the
3 school-to-prison pipeline, the
4 School's Diversion Program was
5 developed via collaboration between
6 the Philadelphia Police Department,
7 the School District of Philadelphia
8 and the Philadelphia Department of
9 Human Services.

10 And I want to really key into
11 the fact of how important that
12 support has been, and particularly
13 from the Philadelphia Police
14 Department who's moved the School
15 Diversion Officers into my office so
16 we can do a lot of diversion
17 internally. But more importantly the
18 Philadelphia Department of Human
19 Services, they have been with us for
20 nine years supporting almost 2300
21 students that have gone through the
22 intensive preventive programs, and
23 we're greatly appreciative of their
24 support.

25 This initiative of policing

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1 strategies diverts students in lieu
2 of arrests with no delinquency
3 history who commit one of the
4 specified offenses in the school.
5 And based on those identified, they
6 offer voluntary community-based
7 prevention services to those diverted
8 students and their families. And
9 since the implementation of the
10 program in 2014, there has been an 84
11 percent reduction in school-based
12 arrests. And so, we went from a
13 system that was arresting 1600 kids a
14 year to a system last year that only
15 did almost 150 students.

16 The School Safety is currently
17 designing a comprehensive violence
18 reduction program in Bartram High
19 School, which we hope to be an
20 implementation model for some of our
21 community-based models. What does
22 that model do, engage in high-risk
23 high school youth in a suite of
24 intervention components to reduce
25 participation in violence, prevent

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1 younger children from engaging in
2 violence. This place-based strategy
3 has a foundation in the Office of
4 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency's
5 comprehensive gang model multi-
6 component strategy to reduce violence
7 and gang group and gang crime
8 involvement in youth in gangs, and we
9 hope that that is a promising
10 initiative we are involved in.

11 Our office is also partnered
12 with the Philadelphia Police
13 Department and the Police Athletic
14 League. Utilizing my Office of
15 School Safety staff, we've been able
16 to create three PAL Centers in three
17 of our toughest neighborhoods in the
18 City of Philadelphia, Tilden Middle
19 School, Roberto Clemente and Harding
20 Middle School.

21 The OSS PAL Centers follows a
22 legacy of PAL of students where these
23 locations are centered around the OSS
24 restorative justice model by building
25 and fostering positive relationships

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1 with school safety officers, students
2 and their surrounding communities
3 while giving students a positive
4 outlook in their neighborhood to
5 exercise, socialize and build
6 positive relationships through
7 teamwork, character-building,
8 mentoring and restoring circles.

9 Another area we really have
10 focused on over the last two years,
11 our threat assessment process. That
12 takes the appropriate and
13 preventative, corrective measures to
14 maintain a safe and secure school
15 environment, to protect them, to
16 support the potential victims and
17 provides assistance to students being
18 assessed. We have two social workers
19 in my office who are trained in
20 crisis management and respond to
21 these incidents.

22 We have responded to over 225
23 threats of gun violence made by
24 students last year. Through this
25 process we're able to effectively

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1 address the students behavior and get
2 them the support they need in lieu of
3 arrest. When I came on into the
4 school safety in 2019, we started our
5 School Safety Mentoring Program.
6 It's a mentoring initiative that
7 helps support youth through
8 mentorship. Participating students
9 receive mentoring from our school
10 safety officers, and they will engage
11 in meaningful conversation,
12 accountability, positive anger
13 expression, leadership. And in a
14 couple of weeks, we're taking about
15 80 students to Washington, D.C. to
16 the African American Museum in
17 Washington, D.C. and getting the kids
18 out of the neighborhood.

19 Part of that work is our
20 Transition Mentoring Program that was
21 implemented in partnership with the
22 Office of School Safety Students
23 Rights and Responsibility and to
24 ensure students transition from any
25 type of placement experiences a

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1 smooth transition back into our
2 school communities.

3 Police staff work with -- my
4 program staff works closely with
5 these students to help them
6 understand they have support and
7 someone to hold them accountable and
8 help them along the way to be
9 successful. At the way this violence
10 has significantly impacted our
11 students both in the community and at
12 the doorsteps of our schools, as I
13 stated at the beginning it's
14 unacceptable. The level of trauma
15 that our school leaders and staff are
16 exposed to is heartbreaking. We
17 cannot normalize what we're seeing in
18 the community at our schools. We
19 must utilize all of our intervention,
20 prevention and enforcement tools
21 collectively if we want to
22 significantly reduce the level of
23 violence we're seeing on a daily
24 basis.

25 I want to thank the Special

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1 Committee and the Chair and the
2 Co-Chair for the opportunity to speak
3 today and I look forward to answering
4 any questions. I'll stop there,
5 Mr. Chair.

6 THE CLERK: Next we have
7 Dr. Jayme Banks.

8 DR. BANKS: (Muted).

9 THE CLERK: Dr. Banks, I
10 believe you might be muted.

11 (No response.)

12 THE CLERK: No, we can still
13 not -- we may not be able to hear you
14 still. If you're having technical
15 difficulties, you may have to log out
16 and log back in.

17 We could move on to the
18 next --

19 DR. BANKS: Can you hear me
20 now?

21 THE CLERK: Perfect, we can
22 hear you.

23 DR. BANKS: Thank you. Sorry.
24 All right. Start over. Good
25 morning. Thank you for inviting me

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1 to provide testimony today. My name
2 is Dr. Jayme Banks. I'm Deputy Chief
3 of Prevention, Intervention and
4 Trauma at the School District. I'm
5 here today to give you a deeper
6 understanding of our supports and
7 services that the District currently
8 has put in place to address the gun
9 crisis in our City.

10 So we use a multi-faceted
11 approach to support our students,
12 staff and families, and this includes
13 prevention services for students as
14 well as interventions for students
15 who have been most impacted by gun
16 violence and who are at greatest
17 risk. I will start with a brief
18 overview of our school-wide universal
19 programming. These are services and
20 programs that are provided to all
21 students with the goal of building
22 students' social and emotional skills
23 supporting their development of
24 positive relationships which is key
25 and improving overall school climate.

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1 These supports are overseen by
2 our District's Office of School
3 Climate and Culture. So for over the
4 past decade we have been pouring
5 resources and investing in evidenced-
6 based, school-wide social-emotional
7 and climate programming. Since 2019
8 the percentage of schools that have
9 these programs in their school plans
10 have increased from 39 to 99 percent.

11 In addition, the District has
12 expanded from offering just one
13 school-wide climate programming known
14 as Positive Behavior Interventions
15 and Supports, PBIS, to now offering
16 several options that schools can
17 select from in their planning, the
18 school planning process. As an
19 example of one of the expanded
20 options we've developed for schools,
21 SDP is excited about the growth of
22 our Relationships First program.
23 It's our school-wide restorative
24 justice model.

25 The program has expanded to

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1 roughly 70 schools. We have been
2 seeing some really transformative
3 results from the work at the schools
4 that have chosen this model. An
5 example of that would be in South
6 Philadelphia High School.

7 Relationships First also has been
8 recognized by the U.S Department of
9 Education as a national model.

10 We've recently received a \$4
11 million Innovation and Research grant
12 from the Department of Education to
13 expand and study Relationships First
14 over the next five years.

15 Relationships First is an example of
16 a program that proactively builds on
17 community and relationships and
18 support students in more targeted
19 ways through processes called Welcome
20 Circles and Circles of Support and
21 Accountability. This ensures that
22 students have a strong network of
23 support, and the school community
24 shares in commitments to help support
25 the students that are participating

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1 in these circles.

2 Research points to a
3 significant role for these evidence-
4 based practices, school-wide social-
5 emotional and climate intervention
6 programs and preventing violence in
7 and outside of school. These
8 programs work to reduce violence in
9 several ways.

10 First, they strengthen their
11 relationships between and among
12 students and adults in the school.
13 Strong relationships with adults and
14 peers in school are among the
15 strongest protective factors for
16 youth against engaging in violence
17 and criminal activity. Second, these
18 programs equip students with concrete
19 skills and critical areas like
20 conflict resolution and emotional
21 regulation that they're able to
22 practice prior to being in a
23 stressful situation.

24 Third, by reducing behavioral
25 disruptions these programs create

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1 environments that are more welcoming
2 and conducive to learning, therefore
3 improving attendance and engagement
4 and learning. Students who are more
5 engaged in school and school-based
6 activities are less likely to engage
7 in violent and criminal activity.
8 And four, these programs are
9 demonstrated to reduce incidence of
10 bullying, which also frequently leads
11 to violence.

12 So research conducted by our
13 Office of Research and Evaluation has
14 demonstrated that our investment in
15 these universal climate approaches
16 and social-emotional learning program
17 has made schools safer and stronger.
18 For example, schools that have
19 implemented PBIS in the five years
20 leading up to the pandemic saw
21 serious incidents decrease at seven
22 times the rate of other schools.

23 PBIS schools also saw a
24 decrease in suspensions and some
25 positive effects around academics.

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1 All of this is consistent with
2 national research. Therefore,
3 although violence in our City is on
4 the rise, the District's focus on
5 universal climate and social-
6 emotional programming has helped to
7 ensure that school is one of the
8 safest places for our students to be.

9 In addition to the climate
10 programming that I just spoke about,
11 we've become a leader among urban
12 school districts in capturing our
13 students' voices and leveraging them
14 to improve supports that help prevent
15 violence. This year the District
16 formally introduced the Student Well-
17 Being Survey. It's a five-minute
18 questionnaire that is completed
19 quarterly by students in grades 3
20 through 12.

21 In their most recent
22 administration, 70 percent of all
23 students within that range completed
24 the survey. The survey captures a
25 couple things. One, their perception

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1 of quality of their relationships
2 with adults in their schools. Two,
3 the perceptions of quality of their
4 relationships with their peers.
5 Three, their comfort with and use of
6 social-emotional skills in areas like
7 conflict resolution and self-
8 regulation.

9 As noted, these areas are
10 critical in the prevention of
11 violence. We are seeing a very
12 strong correlation at the high school
13 level between students' positive
14 reports of their relationships in
15 schools on the Student Well-Being
16 Survey when we connect that with
17 attendance and academic achievement,
18 so we're seeing a strong relationship
19 between their positive relationships
20 and attendance and academic
21 achievement. Once again, these
22 activities described are universal
23 supports and they're overseen by
24 Dr. Abby Gray, the Deputy Chief of
25 the Office of School Climate and

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1 Culture.

2 I will now discuss service and
3 supports for students with more
4 needs, higher-level needs. Our
5 District has robust and ever-
6 expanding amount of supports for our
7 students with the greatest with --
8 and need more support. This includes
9 our students that have been victims
10 of gun violence as well as other
11 tragic events, and these students are
12 struggling because they've lost loved
13 ones or just the amount of things
14 that have occurred or have kind of
15 built up.

16 We provide supports and
17 services to the victims, siblings,
18 school-aged family members and
19 friends and the school community. We
20 identify these individuals so we can
21 target our response to them to make
22 sure that they get the level of
23 support that they need. The
24 additional behavioral and mental
25 health supports that students receive

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1 are provided by both School District
2 employees and community partners that
3 specialize in various behavioral and
4 mental health areas.

5 Over the past four years,
6 we've increased the number of school
7 counselors that have been hired by
8 the District. Counselors provide
9 everything not limited to check-ins,
10 individual sessions, small group
11 interventions, referral for services
12 for more intensive needs,
13 coordinating care between community
14 partner providers that are providing
15 those services to make sure that
16 we're making that connection inside
17 of school.

18 In addition to counselors, we
19 also have our Support Team for
20 Educational Partnership, that program
21 that has grown over the past years.
22 The STEP team consists of four
23 individuals, two of which are
24 master's level clinicians and they
25 provide a clinical support individual

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1 group as well as case management and
2 other services that decrease the
3 social determinants that mostly
4 impede the ability for our students
5 to access the support they need.
6 They may not -- they may need mental
7 health support but may not want to
8 access, and these people kind of help
9 make sure that they connect them to
10 services.

11 We continue to work with
12 community partners to support
13 students and communities that have
14 been affected by gun violence. These
15 services range from again addressing
16 individual needs, small group needs
17 as well as community-wide needs. We
18 have -- and this is a short list, but
19 these are some of the partners that
20 we definitely work with, the Office
21 of Violence Prevention, the Rapid
22 Response Team, Intensive Behavioral
23 Health Services, IBHS, which is
24 funded and overseen by Community
25 Behavioral Health. There's a mental

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1 health provider in each of our
2 schools.

3 Additionally, we work with
4 Uplift Center for Grieving Children
5 that has the Philly Hope Line as well
6 as provides grief services inside of
7 school and outside, and also Jewish
8 Children and Family Services, which
9 they provide a range of prevention
10 services, including signs of suicide
11 which is the evidence-based
12 intervention again to make sure that
13 we are reaching our kids and
14 communities with the interventions
15 that they need.

16 The impact of trauma on our
17 youth is undeniable. In addition to
18 the services that I mentioned above,
19 we are continuing to look at how to
20 support our adults as well as our
21 children given all that's gone on.
22 In addition to the training that we
23 have been providing to our staff, we
24 also partner with Network of
25 Neighbors, who really comes into the

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1 school community and really helps
2 them work through the trauma that
3 they have experienced.

4 We also work with Lakeside
5 Global Institute to name another
6 partner. As the gun violence and
7 trauma our school communities
8 experience continue to increase, it's
9 important to introduce new evidence-
10 based approaches to address the needs
11 of our community. The District is
12 working with Dr. Shawn Ginwright to
13 bring Healing Centered Engagement to
14 our District and Philadelphia.
15 Healing Centered Engagement
16 emphasizes the voice, youth voice in
17 healing through principles of
18 culture, agency and individual and
19 collective agency, relationships
20 meeting aspirations.

21 This approach to individual
22 healing, there's a prerequisite that
23 you have to start working on yourself
24 before you can help others. So as we
25 are bringing this to our District, to

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1 Philadelphia, we're helping the
2 individual helpers to make sure that
3 they're taking care of themselves so
4 that they can help our youth.

5 As school communities begin on
6 their healing-centered journey,
7 students will also have the
8 opportunity to go through a healing
9 process at a camp that we're going to
10 hold this summer where they're going
11 to have an experienced healing center
12 engagement within this camp.

13 The District continues to
14 expand our transition services for
15 youth coming out of delinquent and
16 dependent placements in hospital
17 settings. We have case managers that
18 provide support as well as mentoring.
19 We are expanding our mentoring
20 options and services that are
21 available to youth in the transition
22 center so that we can again reach
23 more youth, and we're also offering
24 them opportunity to earn credit and
25 participate in restorative circles as

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1 they transition back into the
2 District.

3 I hope this brief overview has
4 provided a better understanding of
5 efforts the School District is doing
6 to really support our students. As
7 we know, the violence that is
8 plaguing our City is not occurring in
9 just inside of our schools. For
10 these reasons, the greatest need is
11 not necessarily for new or different
12 District support but rather than a
13 coordinated community effort that
14 includes communication, collaboration
15 across all the different entities so
16 that we can be most impactful with
17 our supports and services.

18 In terms of budget asks, our
19 District is currently in the process
20 of developing a new strategic plan.
21 This is a process that has been going
22 on for over a month that has included
23 listening and learning sessions and a
24 lot of community input. It will
25 culminate very soon with the release

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1 of Dr. Watlington's plan for
2 improvement. Once this process is
3 complete, the Superintendent will
4 return with detail asks that are
5 directly related to the greatest
6 areas of need that emerge from
7 strategic planning process.

8 During the questions and
9 answer time, Dr. Chief -- sorry,
10 Deputy Chief Dr. Abby Gray of the
11 Office of School Climate and Culture
12 and Rachel Holzman of Student Rights
13 and Responsibilities are also
14 available to answer questions, as
15 some of the work I discussed is
16 within their office. Thank you so
17 much for the time today.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
19 you.

20 Will the Clerk please call the
21 next panel -- I mean, not panel,
22 individual on the panel.

23 THE CLERK: Next to testify we
24 have Kimberly Ali and Gary Williams
25 followed by Dr. Ruth Abaya.

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1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Just
2 state your name for the record and
3 please begin.

4 COMMISSIONER ALI: Kimberly
5 Ali, Commissioner for the
6 Philadelphia Department of Human
7 Services. Good morning, City
8 Councilmembers Gauthier, Johnson and
9 members of the City Council's Special
10 Committee on Gun Violence Prevention.
11 With me today is Dr. Gary D.
12 Williams, Deputy Commissioner of
13 Juvenile Justice Services and Nadine
14 Perese, Chief of Finance. Today we
15 have been asked to provide testimony
16 and response to Resolution No.
17 220985. The mission of DHS is to
18 provide and promote safety,
19 permanency and well-being for
20 children at risk of abuse, neglect
21 and delinquency.

22 In our Juvenile Justice
23 Services Division, we fund a full
24 range of programs designed to divert
25 young people from entering the

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1 juvenile justice system, prevent
2 further involvement into the system
3 for children who have been arrested
4 and provide rehabilitative services
5 for children adjudicated delinquent.

6 We work with our partners in the
7 First Judicial District, Juvenile
8 Probation, the District Attorney's
9 Office and the advocate community to
10 develop and fund programs designed to
11 meet these goals. We also
12 collaborate with our Office of
13 Children and Families partners to
14 ensure that young people enroll in
15 WorkReady, Out-of-School Time and
16 adult education programs.

17 We believe in a community-
18 based approach to prevention. Over
19 the past several years, we have
20 increased and expanded our use of
21 diversion and prevention services.
22 We concentrate on providing safe
23 places, supportive services and
24 positive activities for youth,
25 including those who may be at risk of

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1 involvement in gun violence.

2 Community-based organizations
3 operate these programs delivering an
4 interactive curriculum to keep young
5 people engaged in services. We
6 operate three main programs that are
7 open to youth ages 10 to 21 and they
8 require no referral. These programs
9 are designed to help youth at risk of
10 becoming entangled with the juvenile
11 justice system.

12 The programs share a common
13 goal to connect with youth. They
14 emphasize family engagement, conflict
15 resolution, violence prevention,
16 mentorship, coaching and providing
17 other service linkages. These
18 programs are the Community Evening
19 Resource Centers. Since opening in
20 2021, the centers have connected with
21 742 youth among 2,700 visits. This
22 number includes both youth who may
23 have come to the center voluntarily
24 or by way of the Philadelphia Police
25 Department for a curfew violation.

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1 Intensive Prevention Services

2 is a diversion service that works
3 with both the youth and family to
4 build resiliency and a sense of self-
5 worth for the young person. In FY22,
6 832 youth were referred. It is both
7 a case management and a site-based
8 service, which offers positive youth
9 development programs and support to
10 keep young people on track. This
11 program has a capacity to serve
12 approximately 1300 youth per year.

13 Don't Fall Down in the Hood is
14 designed for youth who have been
15 exposed to gun violence or who have
16 gun charges. DHS recently expanded
17 the program to allow for self-
18 referrals. Annually this program has
19 a capacity to serve a little over 450
20 youth per year. The expansion allows
21 DHS to provide additional support to
22 young people, preventing them from
23 further involvement in the system.

24 We believe that providing
25 community-based alternatives help to

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1 reduce youth incarceration and curb
2 recidivism. Our JJS Division offers
3 several programs available to youth
4 post-arrest. Many of these resources
5 are court-ordered and serve as a
6 community-based alternative to secure
7 detention or long-term residential
8 placement. These programs all share
9 similar goals including, but not
10 limited to, helping youth with
11 cognitive behavioral change, life
12 skills, violence prevention, group
13 activities and positive community
14 integration.

15 Some of our post-diverse
16 programs which require many hours of
17 participation and increased
18 supervision are our pre-evening
19 reporting center, inhome detention,
20 post-evening reporting center,
21 community intervention center,
22 intensive supervision program,
23 aftercare evening reporting center
24 and reintegration case management to
25 integrate youth back into their

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1 communities after their placement.

2 The highest level of services
3 that we provide are detention and
4 placement services. At the
5 Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Service
6 Center while youth are detained
7 waiting for their hearings, we offer
8 behavioral health support, education
9 and vocational programs. We also
10 fund longer-term placement options at
11 private providers and some of our
12 youth are placed in state facilities.

13 We are very appreciative that
14 both the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
15 and the City of Philadelphia have
16 supported our funding requests to
17 increase youth programming, which
18 includes anti-violence programs and
19 services. We know that supporting
20 youth and their families is a
21 critical part of a comprehensive
22 approach to empowering our young
23 people, uplifting families and by
24 extension, reducing the impact of the
25 rising gun violence.

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1 Thank you for this opportunity
2 to testify. We look forward to
3 collaborating with City Council and
4 other stakeholders to find innovative
5 ways to support youth and families.
6 The lives we are impacting today will
7 lead to safer communities. My team
8 and I are happy to answer any
9 questions. Thank you.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
11 you.

12 Will the Clerk call the next
13 witness on the panel, Dr. Ruth Abaya.

14 DR. ABAYA: Good morning,
15 everyone. Good morning, Council.
16 Thank you so much for having me
17 today. So my name is Ruth Abaya.
18 I'm the Injury Prevention Program
19 Manager at the Health Department, and
20 I'm going to talk a little bit about
21 best practices for addressing youth
22 violence just based on our
23 experiences within our coalitions,
24 our clinical experiences and what we
25 believe is best for children.

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1 So as a pediatrician, I hope
2 to never see children impacted by
3 firearm violence, but the truth is we
4 see children and youth impacted by
5 violence every day. Far too many
6 young people are direct victims of
7 violence, sustaining physical and
8 emotional wounds that affect them,
9 their families and their communities.
10 But beyond that, many youth we see
11 live in acute awareness of the impact
12 of violence on their friends and
13 families and carry with them a sense
14 of loss and a sense of fear at a time
15 when their lives should be focused on
16 realizing their full potential.

17 Firearm violence has always
18 impacted children, but in the setting
19 of an increase in firearm violence in
20 Philadelphia and in many other cities
21 throughout the country, we've seen an
22 uptick in the proportion of children
23 affected. While the number of
24 children that were victims of
25 shooting incidents increased in 2020,

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1 the percent of total shooting victims
2 that were children has also shown an
3 uptick.

4 National research done at the
5 time of the pandemic showed that this
6 was part of a national trend, that
7 there was an increase in children
8 involved in violence on both sides of
9 the gun, which speaks to how
10 structural and societal disruption
11 have such a profound interplay with
12 violence. Children are one of our
13 greatest sources of hope for the
14 future, and thoughtful approaches to
15 prevention and intervention among
16 children and youth is part of any
17 successful gun violence strategy.

18 So I wanted to take a moment
19 to underscore some of the best
20 practices for preventing violence
21 among youth. And the first I'll make
22 mention of is safe storage. So
23 firearm access among youth is
24 complicated, but we do know that
25 research has shown parental ownership

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1 predicts youth possession and that
2 youth access is linked with
3 involvement in violence. So there's
4 no question that the availability of
5 firearms converts risk to youth.

6 Safe storage has implications
7 for access among very young children.
8 That's often where it's discussed,
9 but it's not -- because it's not
10 often realized that children as young
11 as 2 or 3 might be able to pull a
12 trigger. But it also has
13 implications for guns that are lost
14 or stolen and therefore contribute to
15 the cycle of violence.

16 There was a significant uptick
17 in gun ownership around the time of
18 the COVID-19 pandemic, which was
19 reflected in many communities
20 throughout the country, and those
21 firearms are still with us. In
22 addition, novel forms of access
23 including ghost guns pose a new
24 challenge. Increased access is an
25 important factor in violence among

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1 youth that we cannot ignore.

2 Many organizations and health
3 systems have gunlock programs, but
4 learning from families what works
5 best, what is most acceptable and how
6 to ensure that this is a sustainable
7 resource is important. We also must
8 not fail to continue our advocacy in
9 addressing how firearms land on our
10 streets in the first place.

11 Preemption limits our ability to
12 create commonsense policies within
13 our City, but leaders in state
14 government and beyond must continue
15 to be held responsible for the
16 proliferation of firearms.

17 And finally, we have to
18 address what motivates gun carrying
19 in young people, the very real fears
20 that drive the practice and the
21 strategies that are informed by youth
22 that address the assumption that gun
23 carrying prevents violence. Best
24 practices also include focusing
25 beyond just the individual. Research

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1 has found that programs that focus on
2 the family unit or family factors may
3 have greater effect than those that
4 don't. In addition, strengthening
5 protective factors through mentoring,
6 connection to supportive programs,
7 improving skills and creating an
8 environment that fosters thriving
9 through strategies that address
10 community level risk all play a role
11 in preventing violence.

12 It's important to note the
13 role that employment can play. So in
14 Philadelphia, chronic unemployment
15 defined as no employment in the
16 preceding 12 months, especially among
17 men and boys, occurs in similar parts
18 of the City's firearm violence. So
19 creating opportunity for life-
20 sustaining work is an important part
21 of a working strategy.

22 The most important work being
23 done among youth right now has these
24 elements. Employment is tied to
25 educational opportunities as well. A

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1 safe, trauma-informed education is so
2 critical (inaudible) the development
3 of young children and youth.

4 (Inaudible) has the potential to
5 affect so many outcomes. (Inaudible)
6 helping them to get back to building
7 their future.

8 Regardless of which strategies
9 we employ, one important reality s
10 that we have an eye towards
11 sustainability. Programs that engage
12 youth without allowing sufficient
13 (inaudible) and young people notice
14 that kind of commitment and
15 consistency is present. This is
16 particularly true of young people who
17 spent time in the criminal justice
18 system who are returning citizens.
19 We've learned a lot about that from
20 our violence interruption or Cure
21 Violence Coalition, because they work
22 with high-risk youth and trust is a
23 major issue.

24 Finally, I would be remiss in
25 discussing an effective youth

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1 violence prevention strategy if I
2 didn't talk about trauma healing.
3 It's our collective wish that our
4 children never saw or witnessed
5 violence or its effects, but for too
6 many children this is not the case.
7 Effective trauma healing services for
8 the child or young person and for the
9 family unit need to be integrated
10 into any program that's working with
11 youth exposed to or at risk for
12 violence.

13 In summary, an effective youth
14 violence prevention strategy reduces
15 risks such as firearm access,
16 unemployment, inadequate educational
17 support, unhealed trauma. It also
18 builds on protective factors, seeing
19 in each young person and helping them
20 to see in themselves their future
21 potential. A young person is to
22 learn, to explore the world and to
23 discover their place in it. These
24 strategies help build a bridge
25 between their present and a brighter

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1 future. Thank you.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
3 very much.

4 I think, Brett, this ends this
5 particular panel. We can now ask
6 questions; is that correct?

7 THE CLERK: Correct, sir.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.

9 Before I turn it over to my
10 colleagues, I just had a quick
11 question for Dr. Kev -- I said
12 Doctor. Kevin Bethel from the School
13 District of Philadelphia.

14 MR. BETHEL: Yes, sir,
15 Mr. Chair.

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: How are
17 you doing. It's always good to see
18 you. Giving you your public props.
19 I know your heart and your passion is
20 around this issue. As the Captain of
21 17th Police District, I watched you
22 go door-to-door, block-by-block,
23 house-by-house working to save the
24 young people when you served with me
25 in South Philadelphia. And so, I'm

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1 glad that you're taking that same
2 passion and commitment over to the
3 School District.

4 I had a couple questions
5 around twofold. One is a Safe Path
6 Program, right? One of the things I
7 wanted to advocate from my budgetary
8 standpoint is increasing that
9 particular program. And I know when
10 I talked to Erica Atwood, she talked
11 about doing a partnership with Town
12 Watch Integrated Services because
13 they actually do the training.

14 Can you elaborate on what that
15 program looks like, but most
16 importantly what type of expansion is
17 needed particularly in I guess I
18 think would be areas where there's
19 schools where there's high gun
20 violence, and not only gun violence
21 but different types of altercations?
22 Can you give me your perspective from
23 that aspect regarding the Safe Path
24 Program?

25 MR. BETHEL: Yeah. So,

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1 Mr. Chair, the program really is
2 really built to -- one of the
3 challenges we faced when we were
4 looking for volunteers in our
5 corridors as you know for several
6 years, we're just not seeing it.
7 Unfortunately, we're just not. And
8 so, working with one of my colleagues
9 in Chicago, the Chief there, she
10 introduced us to a program that they
11 have been doing for actually several
12 years now where they had created a
13 Safe Passage Program after a young
14 person was killed in the corridors of
15 their school. Now, they have a very
16 robust program run by the City,
17 almost \$30-plus million, and I think
18 they have almost 1500 community-based
19 workers.

20 And so, part of our work was
21 trying to implement this not at the
22 School District, per se, so I'm glad
23 you brought up Town Watch Integrated
24 Services because we really think
25 that's where the work really rests,

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1 right. I mean, I think that's where
2 we'll have long-term sustainability.
3 And because they're actually doing
4 the training with us and they have
5 the infrastructure and the base and
6 all of the mechanism to be able to do
7 that, but part of that work now is we
8 would look forward to collaborating
9 with Town Watch Integrated Services,
10 one, because of their tentacles into
11 the community.

12 We had some challenges getting
13 vendors to be able to take on this
14 charge to support deploying
15 individuals and it's complex, right.
16 I mean, even though we're paying
17 individuals to come to the corridors,
18 it's still some staffing challenges.
19 And so, we're really relying on our
20 vendor to take care of a large
21 percentage of that. But the goal is
22 to put as many adults in that space.

23 Now, we also recognize they're
24 not there to stop gunfire, right.
25 They're not armed. They're not -- I

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1 mean, but part of them are being eyes
2 and ears. We challenge them to get
3 to know the relationship with the
4 kids as they're walking along the
5 corridors, get to know the business
6 community along those corridors and
7 build that cohesion so we can have
8 some, you know.

9 But it's not -- again, I don't
10 want to make it as a perfect entity.
11 It's really about getting adults into
12 that space so we can keep an eye on
13 our young people.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And you
15 just mentioned one part, and I think
16 it's critical for us to examine, and
17 that's the part where it is a
18 disconnect between to be quite frank
19 the community, right, and supporting
20 the young people going to and from
21 school. And what I mean by that is,
22 right, when you do have community
23 members engaged and doing these types
24 of partnerships, now I know growing
25 up you didn't have to have these

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1 types of partnerships because you'll
2 see Mr. Joe and Ms. Sharon outside
3 the school anyway dropping off their
4 own kids, keeping an eye on everyone.

5 But nevertheless, a cohort of
6 individuals from the community that's
7 working not only just in partnership
8 with the District, but most
9 importantly developing a relationship
10 with the young people, right, going
11 to and from school and kind of being
12 the eyes and the ears, but most
13 important a support system for those
14 young people, so that's something I
15 observed.

16 And then I also want to get an
17 idea, has the District thought about
18 recontracting with Philadelphia Anti-
19 Drug Anti-Violence Network? Because
20 I remember years ago they didn't just
21 only work out in the community, they
22 also did intervention inside the
23 schools, right, because a lot of the
24 arguments they start on social media.
25 A lot of the arguments and beef start

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1 inside the school and spill out into
2 the streets. So has that ever been
3 explored as a possibility as well?

4 MR. BETHEL: Yeah. So we
5 haven't had a contract but we use
6 them significantly. I mean, through
7 working with Town Watch Integrated
8 Services, PAAN has been a very
9 prominent supporter in helping us
10 deal with de-escalating situations
11 that we're having at schools,
12 situations we have in our corridors.
13 We have really relied on them to
14 support us on that and they have done
15 that. Any time we've called,
16 Mr. Chair, they have always been in
17 that space.

18 We use Town Watch Integrated
19 Services and their team to support us
20 when we're having issues at schools
21 in particular because of their -- so
22 we haven't did a formal contract, but
23 I can tell you that the supports
24 coming from both PAAN and the City
25 services across the board have been

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1 really, really immense in helping us
2 deal with issues that arise often
3 times unexpectedly, where we need a
4 much more rapid response.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: From your
6 perspective, what's your most
7 critical need? Because you're the
8 person at the end of the day when a
9 person gets murdered outside of a
10 school or there's a fight inside the
11 school or any type of crisis, I mean
12 at the end of the day the buck is
13 going to stop with you. So from your
14 perspective being the head person as
15 it relates to public safety, what's
16 your specific need?

17 MR. BETHEL: I mean, I think
18 you hit it. I mean, the prevention
19 and the Safe Path Program I think can
20 give us some -- where we can
21 definitely have some immediate -- we
22 have to start getting parents more
23 engaged, right. So some of it is not
24 about money. It's about just
25 coordinating engagement which you

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1 started to outline. I mean, we need
2 to get parents more involved in these
3 conversations.

4 I mean, parents are dropping
5 off their kids, picking up their
6 kids, because now we got to get them
7 out their car. I mean, right now I'm
8 getting more parents who are getting
9 involved in fighting outside of our
10 buildings than supporting them. But
11 I think really helping to support the
12 Safe Path Program do that as a -- if
13 we want that to build into a long-
14 term strategy.

15 Right now I'm using that
16 through grant funding and other
17 opportunities, but I think building
18 it into the infrastructure and most
19 of the City gives us some
20 sustainability. I understand the
21 model of volunteers has always been
22 more appropriate. But knowing that
23 we don't, I think it creates an
24 opportunity to have sustainability
25 across that process.

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1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I have
2 several colleagues that have a couple
3 of questions.

4 MR. BETHEL: Yes, sir.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'll save
6 my other questions for another round.
7 But I'm going to push you on this key
8 component. So what is the District
9 doing from this aspect, specifically
10 what's the parent agenda? I mean,
11 since parents play a critical role,
12 what's the agenda to support parents,
13 to get parents inside the schools to
14 help address their trauma and help
15 them also be an integrated part of
16 protecting and keeping our young
17 people safe?

18 MR. BETHEL: Yeah. Well, I
19 mean as you know, they have the
20 Family Engagement Center here at the
21 School District. I know there may be
22 others on here who can speak more
23 directly to that, Chairman Johnson.
24 But that is a real big push. I mean,
25 Dr. Watlington has made that part of

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1 his charge and he included making
2 sure including parents as he's
3 building out his strategic plan. And
4 so --

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I got to
6 ask the tough questions though. But
7 prior to Dr. Watlington, because he
8 just got here, right --

9 MR. BETHEL: Right.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- we've
11 been dealing with gun violence for a
12 significant period of time, and it's
13 not the first time I heard the role
14 that parents play, to be honest with
15 you, or not play in terms of keeping
16 our young people safe or actually
17 engaging in some of the conflicts
18 that's going on I guess. So that
19 probably will be a larger
20 conversation we can have as a whole.

21 But I wanted to know if
22 parents play a role, what type of
23 really initiatives are we doing to
24 support some of the parents and also
25 even weed out some of the ones who

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1 may come up a little riled up and may
2 need some additional calming down and
3 support?

4 MR. BETHEL: Yeah. I can't
5 speak to that directly, Mr. Chair, as
6 to all of the activity. I mean, can
7 we and my office be more intentional
8 about aligning ourselves with
9 parents? Yes. Have we at this point
10 been able to do that from my office?
11 We have not. And so, I'll take those
12 recommendations.

13 But I also would challenge the
14 fact that we have parents acting in
15 manners outside of our school going
16 after students because of some of the
17 laws that are in place as well,
18 right. When you only write a ticket
19 for disorderly conduct, I think I've
20 shared that with you before, when the
21 parents believe they can come up and
22 act in a way that's unacceptable
23 going after other students and then
24 looking at the police department like
25 you can't do anything to me but give

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1 me a ticket, I think we need to start
2 talking about what does it look like
3 to create that buffer around their
4 schools from a safety perspective
5 beyond -- obviously, we're talking
6 about violence today, but that
7 behavior that comes up to schools I
8 think could be also in making
9 exemptions into the disorderly
10 conduct citations, and you know where
11 I'm going with that.

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes. Can
13 I ask just one question though? But
14 even the disorderly conduct question,
15 right, and again does that also
16 include taking you down to the
17 station for a cool-off period?

18 MR. BETHEL: Well, I don't
19 know. I'm not in the policing space
20 at this point but --

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: But I'm
22 sure when you're on patrol and your
23 team is on patrol, a parent does come
24 up there, fight starts out and
25 parents punch a child in the mouth,

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1 which I think is against the law,
2 right, at some point in time that's
3 not proper behavior and that's just
4 inciting more violence, right.
5 Separate from the disorderly conduct,
6 can that person still be taken down
7 to the station for a cool-off period?

8 MR. BETHEL: Well, I don't
9 know if there's any cool off. But I
10 mean, obviously if they engage in a
11 simple assault or assault, that takes
12 them outside of the disorderly
13 conduct realm and that would be an
14 arrestable offense, right. That's
15 not within to capture that. But much
16 of the stuff we see rests in that
17 lower portion of just being
18 disorderly and disrupting the flow.

19 And again, it's not all the
20 time. I'm not saying this is an
21 all-the-time situation, but it is
22 something. But I don't want to lead
23 in that space. I mean, to your
24 earlier point can we as an office do
25 better with parents engagement?

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1 Absolutely. Should we do better with
2 parent engagement around this work?

3 Absolutely. And I think maybe as we
4 think through this Safe Path Program
5 and other things that we're doing,
6 they can be -- I know many of our
7 school leaders as you know have
8 parent associations and really deal
9 with the parents on a more micro
10 level as school leaders in their
11 space, and most of all of them do a
12 very effective job in that. But have
13 we asked them to venture now into
14 this other space, I think it is time
15 for us to really incorporate them
16 into some of the more things that
17 we're dealing with that we've
18 discussed over the years in play, and
19 I take that very seriously and we'll
20 take that as we move forward with our
21 work.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Well,
23 thank you very much for your
24 response.

25 I'm going to turn it over to

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1 Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
3 you, Mr. Chair.

4 I have a couple of questions
5 as well as a comment. First, the
6 comment for Chief Bethel. Thank you
7 for the hard work that you're doing.
8 You're definitely an asset to the
9 School District in the City. I do
10 want to encourage us to think about
11 the Safe Route to School program as
12 just a part of how we do business. I
13 never thought that this should be
14 like some grant-funded thing, that
15 we'll do it if we get money or we'll
16 do it as a pilot.

17 I think in general our City
18 seems to love piloting things that
19 make a lot of sense to just do,
20 right. We're not in the pilot phase
21 of gun violence. We're in the full-
22 fledged phase of gun violence. And
23 so, the solutions, especially the
24 ones that make a ton of sense, just
25 need to happen. And I certainly from

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1 a budget perspective want to support
2 our ability to expand that to every
3 single school that's been struggling
4 with gun violence over these last
5 several years.

6 The questions: The agencies
7 who work on this from an
8 implementation perspective, the
9 School District and DHS, you each
10 talk about really valuable evidence-
11 based prevention and intervention
12 models that you're engaging in and
13 that make a lot of sense. However,
14 we're seeing this problem get worse.

15 And so, my questions for the
16 School District and for DHS are, one,
17 what kind of data are you collecting
18 and what metrics are you using to
19 analyze whether your programs are
20 successful? And then with respect to
21 DHS, I talked to you before the
22 hearing and you mentioned that your
23 staff was working on a report to
24 track outcomes across all of your
25 programs. So in particular,

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1 Commissioner, I'd love for you to
2 speak about that work.

3 And then for the School
4 District, DHS and for Dr. Abaya, I'd
5 love to hear each of you talk about
6 one solution that you'd like to see
7 highlighted this budget cycle that
8 could help to advance and grow your
9 work.

10 So I guess we can start with
11 the District.

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: I think
14 Dr. Banks is still on mute.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
16 Dr. Banks, are you -- I don't think
17 she's on mute. We can't hear her
18 even though she is not on mute. So
19 maybe you can try to work that out.

20 And, Chief Bethel, if you want
21 to chime in.

22 MR. BETHEL: Yeah. And I'll
23 let Dr. Banks talk about your
24 response in her space what they think
25 is needed. So we are evaluating

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1 everything that we're doing,
2 Councilmember Gauthier. One of the
3 things, for example, in our School
4 Diversion Program we brought on in
5 2014 Drexel University Dr. Naomi
6 Goldstein from Drexel University to
7 be our researcher.

8 We turned this into a
9 longitudinal study, so I can share
10 with you and send you the five most
11 recent reports that we've done over
12 the last five years of what that data
13 looked like to show that a kid who
14 was arrested in our school system was
15 1.4 more times likely to be in the
16 system versus kids who are not. Our
17 recidivism rate is 7 points
18 percentages lower than our control
19 group.

20 So we took the group of kids
21 who were locked up in 2013. They've
22 served as our control group
23 throughout this process. And we can
24 see where we have a 41 percent
25 recidivism rate for our kids that are

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1 (inaudible), almost a 48 percent for
2 the kids who were arrested. But what
3 we also qualify in that 41 percent, I
4 didn't lock up 1600 kids, right.

5 We're talking about that cohort of
6 kids who were unfortunately getting
7 arrested for more egregious offenses.

8 One of the things we're also
9 using, we're using the school data.
10 So the school data provides the kids
11 are asked on a yearly basis how they
12 feel going to and from school. So
13 we're using that data of how kids for
14 the purpose of how we select our
15 corridors, using that data to say,
16 well, kids said they do not feel safe
17 going to and from. We combine that
18 with the harm scores from the police
19 department, and we use a 300- to
20 400-foot buffer around the school to
21 say what do those harm scores look
22 like.

23 We use those numerical values
24 to put together to determine a rank
25 structure for where we're going to

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1 put where our corridors are, and it
2 lines up as you already know in some
3 of our most challenging communities,
4 most challenging schools, most of my
5 neighborhood schools and neighborhood
6 high schools and neighborhood middle
7 schools.

8 And so, part of our mentoring
9 work, I have a researcher assigned to
10 my office now who does my research
11 for us, we're doing pre and post
12 surveys. We're asking the kids
13 throughout the process. Now, we're
14 early in our mentoring work so we
15 hope by next year we'll be able to
16 have more succinct numbers of
17 aligning and looking at how those
18 kids are doing well.

19 And one of the projects, we're
20 working with our data evaluation team
21 Dr. Wolford. We're working with
22 collaborating with the police
23 department and the data evaluation
24 team will start a process where we're
25 looking at going back five years of

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1 data. We have five years of data on
2 kids who have been shot as well as
3 kids who've also committed murder and
4 have been shooters, to look at the
5 data going back in time to the
6 earlier question that you said 11
7 years ago, Kevin Bethel, where was
8 the touchpoint. So we're going to be
9 looking at the touchpoint in the
10 School District as to what does that
11 look like. That's going to be a long
12 project, but we're really excited
13 about really digging deep into the
14 data to see if we can go back in time
15 to see where the touches are, could
16 we have done something different with
17 that young person that may have
18 diverted him or her away from going
19 down a different path.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: And
21 when will that work begin and when do
22 you expect that to be finished?

23 MR. BETHEL: So we're applying
24 for a Stoneleigh Foundation
25 fellowship to be able to support that

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1 work. We're confident that's going
2 to move forward and we'll be going
3 through that process. I don't have a
4 timeline specific. I mean, it's
5 outlined in our proposal, but we're
6 hopeful as we work within our
7 partnership both internally and
8 externally to be able to as we
9 identify those entities, we can do
10 that.

11 We can already identify where
12 our schools are and where some of the
13 more high-profile schools are. We've
14 already been able to identify that
15 most of our children are being shot
16 after school within 2 miles of school
17 before 5:30 for our active students.
18 And most of them are not being shot
19 in the zip code that they live.

20 And so, take for example a
21 school like Gratz which is a charter
22 school. Last year they had 12 youth
23 shot. 11 of them were shot within 2
24 miles of their school. Most of them
25 came from 10 different zip codes.

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1 And so, what does that look like. We
2 know that out-of-school time is very
3 critical now, right, for our young
4 people and the work.

5 And so, there's a lot of data
6 to be got, but we definitely have to
7 be data-informed and understand
8 exactly we cannot just do these
9 shotgun approaches. Really we in my
10 office are trying to be really
11 focused on it's not 240 schools are
12 being impacted. You know, it's where
13 can we really start and really have
14 really significant impact, and that's
15 what we're trying to use the data to
16 do.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.
18 What do we do -- you pointed to a
19 very important example, Gratz and all
20 the shootings we've seen within I
21 guess you said a 2-mile radius. What
22 did we do at that school?

23 MR. BETHEL: Yeah. That's a
24 charter school, but I did meet with
25 their members of their team to share

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1 the data, but they're not directly a
2 part of my network as far as what I
3 oversee. But they do have some
4 strong programming in their school,
5 which I can't speak to.

6 I mean, I know that's a
7 Mastery Charter School, but we have
8 been working in collaboration with
9 our charter team and our charter
10 folks and even more now to be able to
11 link some of the activity that we're
12 seeing.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.
14 Dr. Banks, are you -- can we hear you
15 now?

16 DR. BANKS: I think so.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.
18 Did you want to weigh in --

19 DR. BANKS: I --

20 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes.
21 Did you want to weigh in specifically
22 around a short solution you'd like to
23 see highlighted in the short term?

24 DR. BANKS: I will say one
25 thing to piggyback on kind of what

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1 Kevin said and some of the questions
2 you asked him, I think it's
3 definitely about evidence-based
4 interventions, right, but it's also
5 about the collaboration of
6 interventions to really build, to
7 weave something where all of us are
8 working kind of together, right.

9 I think that you will see a
10 greater impact. As internally, we're
11 working with Kevin's office and the
12 work he's doing. He's working with
13 my office. He's working with
14 Dr. Abby Gray's office and Rachel's,
15 so our programming align. And so,
16 that occurring kind of outside of our
17 walls too would strengthen the impact
18 of the great programming that many of
19 our colleagues are doing.

20 I want to --

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Dr. --

22 DR. BANKS: Go ahead.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:

24 Dr. Jayme --

25 DR. BANKS: I want to -- yes?

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1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: If you
2 don't mind, and it's okay,
3 Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier, just to
4 dig a little deeper in your question
5 because, Dr. Jayme, I was going to
6 ask you this on my second round, but
7 this is your second time mentioning
8 it. You talked about greater
9 coordination of all the programs,
10 right, it's your second time saying
11 it, right.

12 So is there a Monday morning
13 meeting with all the key agencies and
14 then just going over what's going on
15 at all the schools of all the
16 agencies, resource support-wise,
17 reviewing? It's kind of like --
18 Kevin, when you were Deputy
19 Commissioner, what was the name of
20 the program that y'all used to have
21 when all the agencies would be inside
22 the room and y'all be reviewing all
23 the shootings across the City of
24 Philadelphia on a weekly basis? I
25 came to it one time. I think it was

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1 held over in the DA's Office
2 building at one time.

3 MR. BETHEL: Was it gun stat
4 when it was over there, gun stat?

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yeah, is
6 there a School District stat where
7 all the teams are meeting Monday
8 morning and just going over
9 everything that's going on across the
10 board and re-evaluating and
11 addressing all the issues, because
12 you mentioned coordination twice and
13 that's the only reason why I asked
14 for a deeper dive on your question?
15 That's all.

16 DR. BANKS: Sure.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Point of
18 information, Mr. Chairman.

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes. Go
20 ahead, sir.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: A couple of
22 things. One, I am convinced now more
23 than ever that the solutions to our
24 gun violence problem exist. Based on
25 the hearings, I'm hearing we have

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1 little pockets of success, little
2 highlights of success. Some of them
3 need to be brought to scale. That's
4 number one.

5 I'm absolutely -- thank you
6 for having this hearing because
7 listening to it, I know the solutions
8 exist. Second thing, one of the
9 things we have in our discussion of
10 public policy is the language
11 problem. Now, you'll call something
12 a tomato. I'll call it /tomato/, but
13 it is actually the same vegetable or
14 fruit, whichever scientific -- so
15 what I'm hearing my good friend
16 Bethel is talking about is safe
17 routes. I call it safe corridors.

18 This morning 7:00 a.m. to your
19 question, Mr. Chairman, six of my
20 high schools and middle schools meet
21 every Monday 7:00 a.m. in what we
22 call Monday morning roll call. The
23 Town Watch is there. The police are
24 there. From time to time the school
25 police have been there. SEPTA is

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1 there. And guess what we talk about?
2 What happened the week before. So
3 I'm going to get you and Member
4 Gauthier into the 7:00 a.m. meeting,
5 but the model exists.

6 But here's the thing, each of
7 the routes, so if you know my area,
8 you got Hilltop, you have Burke
9 Street way, you have Woodcrest way.
10 And if you're from the '70s, '80s,
11 '90s experience, you know what that
12 means, you got Lansdowne Avenue, so
13 you have all of these neighborhoods
14 that these kids got to go to and
15 from. We have put cameras along a
16 safe route, so that is overlaying the
17 Town Watch, the SEPTA, the bike cops,
18 all of that during the arrival and
19 departure of young people. It's
20 still that they get into it. I don't
21 want that to sound like a panacea,
22 but it has definitely cut down on the
23 number of instances since Bernard
24 Scott was murdered right across the
25 street from Overbrook.

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1 So Bethel's point is correct,
2 it doesn't just -- it starts at the
3 school, but it spills out into the
4 street. I can't get you because my
5 gun isn't in school because I had to
6 take it off because of the metal
7 detectors, but wait until I get to my
8 ratchet to see you two blocks away.

9 So what I want to do is
10 encourage you guys to be on that
11 call. Now, what happens is the
12 violence reduces. Guess what pops up
13 in the place of the discussion?
14 Parents. This parent came up and
15 slapped one of my teachers. These
16 kinds of things they're dealing with
17 almost to the level of the gun
18 violence.

19 So I'm going to stop there and
20 I'm going to say that the solutions
21 exist. We got to do two things. We
22 got to speak the same language and we
23 have to bring things that work up to
24 scale. And to my colleagues, you
25 can't be afraid to cut things that

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1 ain't working.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:

3 Dr. Jayme --

4 DR. BANKS: I'll answer your
5 questions.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- and
7 then I'll go back to Gauthier, then
8 Phillips and I'm getting beat up by
9 Councilwoman Lozada. So let me
10 refocus and make sure Members get
11 their time in there.

12 DR. BANKS: But I think what
13 Councilman Jones just shared does
14 answer some questions too. When I
15 say a communication collaboration,
16 I'm not just talking internal. Yes,
17 we're having conversations and
18 meeting about what we are seeing and
19 what our programs are doing. I mean
20 outside the wall what our partners
21 are doing, and more importantly what
22 he said, same language. We have to
23 sometimes -- I believe we come at
24 things from the same place, but we're
25 using different words or the

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1 communication isn't as clear.

2 And so, one of the goals would
3 be to not only know what we're doing,
4 right, we all know why we're doing
5 it, but making sure that we're using
6 the same clear language so that as we
7 are attacking the problem, we're on
8 the same page with how we're doing it
9 and how our supports complement one
10 another, right. And we grow what
11 needs to be grown. And if we find
12 that something is not successful,
13 then we handle that accordingly. But
14 we're working in effort together
15 because it's not just in one domain.

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.
17 Thank you very much.

18 Now, Councilwoman Jamie
19 Gauthier, is your line of questioning
20 finished or you want to wait until
21 the next round?

22 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: No,
23 the last question -- well, sorry. I
24 wanted to hear from DHS about the
25 report that the Commissioner had

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1 mentioned to my office tracking all
2 of their outcomes across their
3 programs and of one solution in the
4 near term. And then I also wanted to
5 hear from Dr. Abaya one solution in
6 the near term.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Go ahead.

8 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yes. So
9 thank you for that question,
10 Councilmember Gauthier. As
11 indicated, our Performance Management
12 and Technology Division wanted to
13 look at young people, in particular
14 young people who are arrested. And
15 so, we went back to Calendar Year
16 2021 in order to determine -- the
17 outcomes for those young people was
18 actually 1,000 young people.

19 I'm hesitant, Councilmember
20 Gauthier, to tell you the results of
21 that because we know that there were
22 some limitations to the data. And
23 I'll tell you why. The percentage
24 was low, so we were all surprised
25 about the low percentage. But part

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1 of the reason as I indicated, we
2 looked at Calendar Year 2021 because
3 remember, our MOU with the court
4 started in 2021. And so, what we've
5 realized is that enough time has not
6 passed since we are only in April of
7 2023. And so, that's why the
8 percentage was low.

9 Also, the percentage was low
10 in terms of the number of young
11 people because our definition of
12 recidivism, so this was a recidivism
13 study, included young people who were
14 discharged from services. Discharged
15 from services also included discharge
16 from the court system. And so, we
17 know and we know this by way of
18 looking at our second analysis that
19 looked at young people who were
20 placed at the PJJSC, the Philadelphia
21 Juvenile Justice Service Center.
22 Again, we looked at a cohort of young
23 people placed at the PJJSC, which was
24 over 1,000 young people in Calendar
25 Year 2022 and learned, I'll give you

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1 a percentage, that one-third of those
2 young people was placed at the PJJSC
3 prior.

4 And so, when you look at our
5 recidivism data, which I indicated
6 was low, compare it to the data of
7 the young people at the PJJSC
8 indicating that at least one-third
9 was there at least twice, it was
10 inconsistent. And so, what we need
11 to do is redefine our definition. So
12 our next study is going to
13 occur young people -- we're going to
14 go back to Calendar Year 2021, which
15 included the 1,000 young people to
16 determine if there were any arrests,
17 any arrests during Calendar Year 2021
18 because these are young people who
19 were known to the department, and
20 then we'll look at the data in
21 reference to that. We also --

22 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Can
23 you just -- I think I'm a little bit
24 confused. So sorry. Can you just
25 clarify what your study of the 1,000

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1 young people showed?

2 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yep. So
3 the study of the 1,000 young people
4 showed that in the next calendar
5 year, so within a year, that only 1
6 percent of those young people
7 recidivated. We believe that 1
8 percent wasn't accurate. And so, we
9 further looked at the 1 percent.

10 The reason why we know it
11 wasn't accurate is because of the
12 definition. And so, we have to
13 expand the definition so that's the
14 next phase.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: What
16 definition were we using?

17 COMMISSIONER ALI: So the
18 definition was looking at those 1,000
19 young people, how many were
20 discharged from probationary
21 supervision. However, when you look
22 at supervision, the length of stay,
23 young people stay on for more than a
24 year. Remember, the cohort is from
25 2021. And so, now we're just in

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1 April of 2023. Enough time has not
2 elapsed because we were using the
3 definition of discharge.

4 And this definition is a
5 national discharge, discharge from
6 probationary supervision, meaning
7 discharge from court, again knowing
8 that that was incongruent when you
9 look at the population of young
10 people who are being held at the
11 PJJSC, as I indicated, at least a
12 third of them has been at the PJJSC
13 twice. So when we looked at that 1
14 percent, we knew that there were some
15 limitations.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
17 you. When will you be -- so it seems
18 to suggest that we actually might
19 have a high or somewhat high
20 recidivism rate. When will you sort
21 of do that report over again with new
22 definitions?

23 COMMISSIONER ALI: So I would
24 say, and I don't know to define high.
25 So we know it's higher than the 1

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1 percent just based on the data from
2 the PJJSC. What we also know is that
3 when we extended it out, we did it
4 with a year. When we extended it out
5 to the 15 months, since it's been 15
6 months, we saw that it was an
7 increase. And that increase was a
8 2.8 percent increase as opposed to
9 the 1 percent.

10 And so, we know that as time
11 goes on that young people if they did
12 not benefit from the service or if in
13 fact they were re-arrested and you
14 don't see it in the first year, then
15 more time needs to elapse. And so,
16 what we are doing now, we also know
17 that in terms of our capacity, this
18 was done by Performance Management
19 and Technology Department.

20 And so, we are actually in the
21 process of hiring a research analyst.
22 The interviews are underway so that
23 we can increase our capacity in order
24 to lead this work again, looking at
25 national best practices in reference

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1 to recidivism as well as juvenile
2 justice and best practices in
3 reference to that. And so, I would
4 anticipate that our next analysis
5 will probably be completed within the
6 next four to six months.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.
8 And then did you want to highlight
9 one short-term solution you'd like to
10 see the City focus on?

11 COMMISSIONER ALI: Yeah. And
12 others talked about that, so
13 listening to the School District
14 certainly speak about this, is that
15 we have to be more intentional. We
16 also looked at -- so the study also
17 had us look at our own programming
18 that we offer. And so, we know that
19 we need to be more intentional with
20 family engagement. Much like the
21 work that we do on the child welfare
22 side in order to keep parents
23 engaged, we have to mirror that on
24 the juvenile justice side.

25 Now, we do certainly offer and

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1 provide family events and events in
2 the community, but we need to be more
3 intentional when we have the parents
4 at the table with us in order to
5 address the violence. And so, that
6 is definitely one solution. The
7 other solution I would say can I
8 offer to -- the other solution I
9 would say is again because we heard
10 from Dr. Abaya around trauma-informed
11 care and making sure that trauma is
12 integrated in all levels of our
13 services, so not only prevention but
14 also our intervention and certainly
15 integrated in our placement. So
16 those are the two major things in
17 terms of solutions.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
19 you. And, Dr. Abaya, did you want to
20 offer one solution the City should
21 focus on in the near term?

22 DR. ABAYA: Sure. And I'm
23 actually going to very briefly offer
24 a few if I can, I apologize, just
25 because there are a couple I wanted

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1 to highlight. So I know I already
2 mentioned safe storage, and safe
3 storage I think sometimes is not
4 something people believe in very
5 deeply.

6 And so, I just want to
7 underscore that it's a solution we
8 believe has been slept on as far as
9 optimizing it. We have some
10 partners, some of whom you'll be
11 hearing from later today in the
12 community who have just been really
13 successful in distributing gun locks
14 even to people who are traditionally
15 thought of as not interested. So I
16 think that it depends -- it matters
17 who the messenger is, and I think
18 that there are some opportunities to
19 expand that better.

20 I won't expand on trauma
21 healing because I already talked
22 about it and it's come up. I was
23 also going to bring up collaboration.
24 So Rebound which is a program in
25 Mastery, is a partnership between

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1 Temple and that Cure Violence program
2 and school. There are these kind of
3 cross-sectional things. This is
4 heavily what the Health Department
5 believes in, is this cross-sectional
6 approach. So integration I think is
7 really important. There have to be
8 similar tables that we're sitting at.

9 And then I wanted to mention
10 one really important, I think, sure
11 short-term priority that hasn't come
12 up yet which is social media. When
13 we're talking about youth, we can't
14 ignore the manifestation of violence
15 in that space. There are some
16 experts here in the City of
17 Philadelphia that I think we could
18 learn from to build a short-term
19 strategy around violence interruption
20 online, which is something that just
21 we haven't really put our toes in
22 yet. So I wanted to mention those
23 things briefly. Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
25 you so much, and thanks to everyone

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1 on the panel.

2 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
4 you.

5 So next we have for
6 questioning Councilmember Anthony
7 Phillips and then Councilwoman Quetcy
8 Lozada and then Councilman Jim
9 Harrity. And we also have present
10 Councilman Isaiah Thomas.

11 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
12 you. Thank you, Chairman Johnson.
13 Councilman Johnson, thank you.

14 I want to circle back to the
15 question that was raised to the
16 public safety officer for the School
17 District around the issue of
18 implementing parent advocate programs
19 or some sort of parent leadership
20 support program, because it is clear,
21 Mr. Bethel, that there is a need for
22 parents to be more involved in the
23 lives of our children, right, when it
24 comes to making violence prevention a
25 reality.

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1 So like you said, some things
2 are beyond funding. However, if we
3 could to the best of our ability
4 create systems and operations, and I
5 want to be on record around this,
6 that can help us help our parents
7 become more involved in their lives
8 or their children, that could be a
9 really huge violence prevention
10 effort, right.

11 So, for example, are we doing
12 home visits constantly, do we have a
13 team of people that we can hire to do
14 home visits constantly to check in on
15 these students who need a little bit
16 more care and support, who are going
17 through troubled situations, right,
18 and that's not, you know, and there's
19 some really targeted number of
20 students that probably need that.

21 Are we making sure that we're
22 engaging those families to understand
23 resources such as maybe emotional
24 trauma support, food resources,
25 whatever that's causing their child

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1 not to be successful or to commit
2 violent crime or to act out in a
3 particular way. How can we make sure
4 that their parents are really
5 involved.

6 And honestly, what we don't
7 hear in the City of Philadelphia as
8 much, Mr. Bethel, which we need to
9 make -- if this is happening, we need
10 to highlight this in an enormous
11 fashion whereas the School District
12 is doing these large-scale parent
13 support programs for our children.
14 And I just think -- so my question is
15 more centered on how can we make this
16 a priority. Because it has been said
17 for decades now even when I was a
18 teenager advocating in our community
19 for things, it takes a village to
20 raise a child, we need to get more
21 parents involved.

22 And that's why even from my
23 office we're putting together a
24 parent advocate program so that we
25 can work with District schools in our

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1 area to make sure the parents are
2 more involved in the lives of their
3 kids so we could have this as a
4 violence prevention method. So I
5 just wanted to bring that to your
6 attention that what are the plans
7 that we can set forth going forward
8 to make this a heavily-funded and
9 supported program to get people on
10 the ground to support our kids in
11 this way?

12 MR. BETHEL: Councilman, I
13 appreciate your statement, your
14 question. Again, I would defer to
15 the Family Center because I'm not
16 sure of all the elements that work
17 within there. But I think there
18 would be absolutely no question, I
19 don't think I'll be out of line to
20 say that there will be an appetite to
21 sit down with you and others in City
22 government to start to think about
23 what that looks like.

24 We know it can work. So when
25 Commissioner Ali was on the call

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1 earlier, we use their Intensive
2 Preventive Services for our
3 programming for our diversion. What
4 does that look like? The social
5 workers as part of our program go to
6 the homes, right. The social workers
7 from the Department of Human Services
8 go to those homes. The kids are
9 being diverted. They talk to those
10 families to see what those needs are.

11 Often times they'll find that
12 it's even greater than what we
13 started out with, right. They'll get
14 into homes and there's no electric,
15 no gas, no food, no clothing, all
16 those insecurities sitting there.
17 And then once they move into one of
18 the seven programs, I think eight
19 programs they have now where our kids
20 get serviced, it's more family-based,
21 not just for the youth. So the
22 infrastructure is there.

23 I think finding and directing
24 your resources to those specific
25 individuals that you're talking about

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1 is important because you can't do
2 200,000 students, but I think it
3 takes a larger conversation. Because
4 again, I don't want to speak out of
5 turn. As we move into this other
6 space, we have to build the
7 infrastructure for that, because
8 having parental participation has
9 always been a challenge as you know,
10 right.

11 And so, really engaging -- I
12 was more proud of the young people in
13 our schools who marched down here to
14 440 when they weren't happy with the
15 school selection process, right.
16 They did it in an organized way.
17 They were combined. They really let
18 their -- we got to find a way to get
19 parents, and maybe it's during a time
20 when it's not during the workweek,
21 right, and maybe doing stuff on
22 Saturdays or Sundays or those later
23 hours where a parent who can't take
24 off work because they only got four
25 days a year to take off, right.

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1 And so, part of it I think is
2 we have to find a way to create the
3 convenience of making sure we
4 maximize those folks coming. And
5 sometimes those time periods are not
6 conducive to the normal business
7 hours.

8 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Yeah, I
9 agree. Yep.

10 MR. BETHEL: So I definitely
11 would love to follow up with you,
12 sir, and have that conversation. I
13 know I confer with Karyn Lynch and
14 her team who run the family
15 engagement and the parent piece of
16 the operation here to have that
17 larger conversation that you just
18 raised. And I think point well-
19 taken.

20 MS. LYNCH: Absolutely, Kevin.
21 And thank you for the opportunity. I
22 hope --

23 MR. BETHEL: Oh, Karyn, I
24 didn't know you were here. I
25 apologize, Karyn. Hi. Okay.

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1 MS. LYNCH: Not a problem.
2 Councilman, I want to stress two
3 things very, very quickly just to
4 answer to your question. One, for
5 every single action that we're
6 involved with students, and we talked
7 about the mental health services, the
8 trauma, we always engage the
9 individual parents in that effort.

10 And I know your question is
11 speaking to an overall what are we
12 doing to bring groups of parents
13 together. But for every action,
14 parent involvement is critical. So
15 we talk about attendance, we talk
16 about improving behavior. Every
17 single effort involves the
18 involvement and the consent and the
19 acknowledgment and frequently a joint
20 understanding where we talk about
21 what the expectations are, what we
22 need from the parent, what we are
23 able to provide and so on and so on.
24 So that effort does take place on an
25 ongoing basis within the School

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1 District.

2 I also want to stress that in
3 all of our schools we have parents
4 and school-based staff that are
5 (inaudible) our Parent Advisory
6 Committee. It's a school advisory
7 committee with a majority of
8 membership of parents. And so, the
9 parents in that school are working on
10 climate and discipline. They're
11 learning what their children are
12 learning about climate and
13 discipline.

14 So if we implement, for
15 example, positive behavioral
16 interventions, parents are going to
17 receive that same type of training so
18 they have an understanding in the
19 home of what their children are
20 experiencing at school and they're
21 speaking the same language. And so,
22 we are very eager to join a citywide
23 effort or initiative that speaks to
24 how we can keep and get parents
25 involved with becoming much better

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1 involved with their children's lives.

2 I'll speak to one more thing
3 because it just occurred. We have
4 Parent Academies with our Family and
5 Community Engagement Office
6 throughout the year in the community,
7 so we go into libraries, we go into
8 community centers, we have frequently
9 gone into PHA locations because we
10 have a good relationship with PHA.

11 We have even gone into -- and
12 you'll hear about this more with our
13 Parent Engagement Conference. The
14 National Conference is coming to
15 Philadelphia in June. We have
16 also -- thank you, Chair Johnson --
17 gone into the prison here in
18 Pennsylvania, and we are actively
19 engaging fathers who are incarcerated
20 with their children's lives.

21 So when you speak to keeping
22 parents involved, that's a national
23 model and the National Conference is
24 going to be held here. And we're
25 actually taking people into the

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1 prison. We're making those
2 arrangements right now because
3 keeping fathers who are incarcerated,
4 keeping parents who are incarcerated
5 involved in their children's lives is
6 extremely important to helping that
7 child grow and recognize what the
8 expectations of society are and what
9 they are not. I hope that answers
10 your question.

11 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: It does.
12 I mean, all this is important for me
13 because recently in the 9th District
14 we had a school -- we had a rec
15 center shooting, and a lot of, you
16 know, sometimes these rec center
17 shootings don't often involve young
18 people but they may involve adults,
19 but the reality of the matter is that
20 I just want to make sure that we
21 don't experience situations where our
22 young people are not involved in
23 positive behaviors.

24 And so, what I imagine more so
25 is how can we make our parent program

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1 a little bit more robust, the Parent
2 Academy and so forth. But I also
3 want to find ways in which we can do,
4 you know, what some traditional
5 educators have done, some from New
6 York that I've observed, even if we
7 moved back to one of our favorite
8 stories around Joe Clark, actually
9 read a book about him and so forth.
10 Those meaningful engagements are
11 really important.

12 If we can kind of get more
13 assistant principals in our schools
14 so they can actually -- some of our
15 principals can actually do more home
16 visits and have deeper conversations
17 that can make a world of a difference
18 in the child's life, that's going to
19 be really, really important to our
20 children.

21 I just think that the idea
22 that, you know, Constance Clayton
23 when she was Superintendent many
24 years ago, one of the things she was
25 in hallmark for is being able to

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1 build those relationships with having
2 teachers and so forth, build those
3 relationships with families. And I
4 think that's going to be really
5 crucial to the success of us getting
6 this violence under control.

7 So what I would love to do
8 with you all is work with you to
9 develop an even more robust parent
10 advocate programming system because
11 our City's been talking about it for
12 too long. I know you all have done
13 some things based off of what you
14 just reported to me, but I just want
15 to make sure that we do more to
16 really publicize that and also make
17 it more robust so that our City can
18 really feel -- our residents can
19 really feel like oh, wow, our City is
20 working in this way. So thank you.

21 MS. LYNCH: I look forward to
22 that. Thank you.

23 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
24 you, Councilman Johnson.

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank

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1 you. I've been reprimanded by my
2 colleague Councilwoman Quetcy Lozada
3 because she was in the queue prior to
4 the young Anthony Phillips.

5 Councilwoman Quetcy Lozada, I
6 don't want no smoke. I acknowledge
7 you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: I'm not
9 reprimanding anybody. I just wanted
10 to know what happened. I wanted to
11 make sure you found me, you saw me
12 there.

13 No, I want to say thank you to
14 all of you for all of the work that
15 you all are doing as it relates to
16 showing that young people are
17 connected with the services that they
18 desperately need. But I also can't
19 help but be extremely frustrated at
20 the fact that every time we sit in
21 front of the School District or
22 members, employees of the School
23 District, we continue to hear about
24 plans. We're planning this. We are
25 assessing this or we are assessing

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1 that. And this has been going on
2 prior to Dr. Watlington coming.

3 And so, I'm frustrated because
4 I haven't heard of, listen, this is
5 what we've been doing and it worked
6 out really well and we're doing more
7 of it or, no, we haven't done X, Y
8 and Z, and we know that this is what
9 we need because we've heard from
10 young people, we've heard from
11 parents that this is what is needed
12 in order to provide them with the
13 necessary support, and we haven't
14 gotten that yet.

15 Many of my colleagues have
16 been talking about parent engagement.
17 And as I've talked to parents, most
18 of what they have said or often times
19 they say, I've reached out to the
20 School District of Philadelphia, I've
21 reached out to the Office of Children
22 and Families in the City to express
23 my concern regarding my son or my
24 daughter because they are connected
25 to activity that is going to get them

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1 in some type of trouble and I get no
2 kind of support.

3 And so, can someone please
4 speak to me about engagement --
5 parent engagement, the topic of
6 parent engagement is not new. Can
7 someone please tell me about what you
8 all have done up until now and how we
9 can be supportive moving forward to
10 change how we're engaging parents,
11 right?

12 There are parents who have
13 connected to the courts and have said
14 my child is not coming to school,
15 right, they're struggling, they are
16 hanging around the wrong group of
17 people and I can't get the necessary
18 support from the School District,
19 from the Administration, from the
20 Police Department, from the courts,
21 what do I do.

22 MS. LYNCH: So I can address
23 that, Councilwoman. Thank you for
24 the question. Every single thing
25 that I mentioned is something that

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1 we're doing right now. So working
2 with incarcerated parents, that's not
3 something that's planned. That's
4 something that -- gosh, Councilman
5 Johnson, how long have you been doing
6 that? That's six, seven years at
7 least I think it was when the two of
8 us visited the prison and initiated
9 that work.

10 The School Advisory Councils
11 where parents are actively involved
12 in the decision-making that takes
13 place within our schools, that's been
14 going on for the better part of the
15 last six, seven years and even before
16 that it was done informally. We have
17 parents that are involved in the
18 budget. Because of the School
19 Advisory Councils, they're involved
20 in the budgeting process, the
21 delivery of services within a school.
22 And so, that is an ongoing effort.

23 Kevin made mention of the
24 Diversion Program. That Diversion
25 Program has been going on for six or

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1 seven years, and that involves DHS.
2 Other agencies support across the
3 City in order to divert a child from
4 arrest. There's a parent involvement
5 and parent services and services to
6 the family. When we talked about the
7 mental health services that we offer
8 and the behavioral health services
9 that are offered, we partner with
10 CBH, we partner with DHS and the
11 parent is actively involved in the
12 process because no service can be
13 provided without a parent's consent.
14 So parents are actively involved.

15 When parents come to us and
16 they share what it is that their
17 child is experiencing, very
18 frequently we are able to do what I
19 would call an assessment or an
20 assessment of threat. Frequently
21 that comes out of the Office of
22 Safety when it's determined what the
23 threat assessment might be or what
24 the safety supports need to be, and
25 we make efforts to try and address

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1 the issues that parents bring to us.

2 Frequently we work with other
3 agencies in order to do that. When
4 parents come to us and it's a service
5 that is beyond our reach or beyond
6 our effort, we turn to our partner
7 agencies across the City like, CBH,
8 DHS in order to provide services. I
9 think DHS will tell you and can tell
10 you most accurately the numbers of
11 referrals that come from the School
12 District and from public education
13 and the education systems across the
14 City regarding what is happening with
15 children, with regard to possible
16 threats to their safety, their need
17 for protection. That agency conducts
18 child welfare investigations.

19 And so, in that regard I'm
20 just sharing just a few things just
21 to share that, one, these are not
22 things that we are planning. These
23 are things that we are actively
24 doing. The STEP program that exists
25 within the schools that provides Tier

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1 2 supports, that is something that
2 we've been doing. And --

3 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: I don't
4 want to interrupt you. I don't want
5 to interrupt you, but now I'm even
6 more concerned, right, because you're
7 giving me a list of all of these
8 programs that involve engagement.
9 But folks that spoke prior to you are
10 talking about the importance of or
11 the lack of having engagement or the
12 need for more parent engagement.

13 And so, my concern is are you
14 and the School District also working
15 in silos like we often times do at
16 the City, right? Are you guys
17 connecting, communicating with each
18 other to share what programs are
19 available and you're offering
20 families and just not talking to each
21 other?

22 MS. LYNCH: So within the
23 School District we're talking to each
24 other. With the child welfare and
25 social service agencies, we're

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1 talking to each other. We talk
2 frequently and engage frequently
3 sometimes more with external partners
4 than we do with internal.

5 We are talking frequently.
6 For example, with Homeless Education
7 Services and the School District
8 speak very frequently with homeless
9 education -- I mean, with the
10 homeless programs across the City. I
11 understood the Councilmember, and
12 perhaps I misunderstood, but I
13 thought what he said was that he's
14 familiar with some of the parent
15 engagement work that we are doing
16 right now and he would like to see us
17 move to a higher level as a community
18 and work more effectively to build
19 more of a larger collaborative
20 effort. And I support that. But we
21 are doing many things right now.

22 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: All
23 right. I appreciate that. I'd like
24 to know how my office could -- just
25 like Councilman Phillips, I'd like to

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1 know how we can be supportive. One
2 of the complaints I get in my
3 District from parents who are trying
4 to receive services or support
5 services for their children, for
6 their families from the School
7 District or from the Office of
8 Children and Families and they feel
9 like they've not been supported. And
10 so, if you could share with me some
11 of what your programs are that we can
12 share forward. We're out in the
13 community every Wednesday at a
14 different school, a different church,
15 a different recreation center, a
16 different school. That's where
17 parents come to talk to us.

18 And so, if you can share with
19 me and my office some of the
20 information that you all have
21 available, I'm happy to share it
22 forward as well.

23 MS. LYNCH: So, Councilwoman,
24 I might be able to do you better than
25 that. We will definitely share the

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1 information with you. But if you let
2 us know where you're going to be and
3 in which community, we might even be
4 able to send someone from the school
5 system to join your effort within the
6 community. So the questions that
7 parents have that are not getting
8 addressed, the issues and concerns
9 that parents have that have not been
10 addressed, and even share with them
11 what services are available and what
12 can be done. We would be glad to
13 join you on that effort --

14 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

15 Absolutely --

16 MS. LYNCH: -- if you make
17 your schedule available.

18 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: --

19 absolutely. I will take you up on
20 it. I will send you the flyer on a
21 monthly basis of where we're going to
22 be, yes.

23 MS. LYNCH: Excellent.

24 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: You're
25 welcome to join us. Thank you.

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1 MS. LYNCH: Thank you.

2 COMMISSIONER ALI: Can I just
3 add something, Councilmember Lozada,
4 on behalf of the Office of Children
5 and Families. As you know under the
6 Office of Children and Families is
7 the Department of Human Services, but
8 it also is Parks & Recreation, the
9 Free Library of Philadelphia, PHL
10 Pre-K, Community Schools, Adult
11 Education.

12 And so, what I wanted to also
13 let you know is that what we are
14 working on we do have all of our
15 prevention services, our intervention
16 services listed on both the Office of
17 Children and Families' website as
18 well as the Department of Human
19 Services' website, but we also know
20 that we have to do better in terms of
21 getting the word out to parents.

22 And so, we are working on by
23 Council District a list of resources.
24 We're working on that now that we
25 will send over to City Council. We

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1 know that as new programs come on
2 board, we have to refresh that
3 information and then very soon
4 Council will also hear from us. Us
5 meaning the Office of Children and
6 Families, Department of Human
7 Services, all of our prevention
8 services as well as Parks & Rec, the
9 Free Library, the Office of Violence
10 Prevention.

11 We're going to do a whole big
12 fair within the next month or so for
13 families, because we know again -- so
14 what we want to do on the website
15 making sure that y'all have printable
16 documents but also making sure that
17 we all make ourselves available so
18 that we can also engage families so
19 that they know what services are out
20 there for their young people. By all
21 means any time a parent comes to the
22 department and wants services, we
23 want to make sure that we're able to
24 service those families. So more to
25 come around that.

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1 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank
2 you so much. And I appreciate the
3 fact that you all are going to be on
4 the ground because often times we
5 talk about the digital divide that
6 exists in our City, and yet we offer
7 services primarily online and that's
8 part of the reason why our families
9 can't get it.

10 And so, the fact that you all
11 are going to be on the ground
12 offering those services in person is
13 appreciated and I invite your office
14 as well to participate and join us on
15 any Wednesday evening at a different
16 part of the District. Thank you so
17 much for that.

18 COMMISSIONER ALI: Absolutely.
19 Thank you.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
21 Councilman Jim Harrity.

22 COUNCILMAN HARRITY:
23 (Inaudible) --

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I think
25 for some reason your connection may

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1 not -- it sounds a little --

2 COUNCILMAN HARRITY:

3 (Inaudible).

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yeah, it
5 sounds a little like you're
6 underwater.

7 COUNCILMAN HARRITY:

8 (Inaudible).

9 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Jim,
10 you might want to turn your camera
11 off. That might help.

12 COUNCILMAN HARRITY:

13 (Inaudible).

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: No, sir.
15 It's still the same.

16 THE CLERK: Council Support
17 suggests -- Councilmember, Council
18 Support says maybe logging out and
19 then logging back in might help with
20 the connection.

21 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Okay.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: As we
23 wait for Councilman Jim Harrity to
24 fix his technical difficulties, any
25 other Members that have a question?

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1 (No response.)

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.

3 Hearing none, we'll give Councilman
4 Jim Harrity an opportunity to log
5 back on and ask his question before
6 we go off to the next panel. But
7 Superman --

8 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

9 Councilman, can I ask a quick
10 question?

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, you
12 can.

13 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: My
14 question is I heard Chief Bethel
15 mention earlier that some of his
16 office's services or some of the work
17 his office is doing is different or
18 is not in collaboration with our
19 charter schools. Is there a specific
20 reason for that? How do we connect
21 with what is happening in our charter
22 schools with what is happening in our
23 public schools?

24 Often times they're very in
25 close proximity from one another.

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1 Kids live in the same neighborhood.
2 Some of the issues that arise often
3 are from kids that participate or
4 attend some of these charter schools.
5 So how is the collaboration with the
6 charter school offices as well as
7 with the School District? How do we
8 get you all kind of working together
9 and being able to --

10 MR. BETHEL: I don't mean to
11 state that we don't work together.
12 It's just because my work as School
13 Safety I oversee the public school
14 schools and then all of those have
15 their entities. But there's a strong
16 collaboration first with the police
17 department. So the police department
18 is not concerned whether they're
19 charter schools or public schools.

20 So I know the police
21 department works effectively across
22 all of those entities, and even in
23 our safe zones we're covering charter
24 schools in that space. We are
25 regularly communicating to our

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1 charter schools. We have a Chief of
2 School Safety here who we often --
3 even when we have those, so for
4 example, those incidents where we
5 have a student who's been shot or
6 unfortunately killed, both are
7 enforced situations. That same
8 information we send over to our
9 charter schools through our Chief of
10 Charters to make sure that those
11 charter schools are informed.

12 We've been really working more
13 collaboratively now in that space of
14 really talking, communicating with
15 our charter schools when we have
16 issues. I have area managers who are
17 working across the City. I have 11
18 areas of managers. They're
19 constantly negotiating between what's
20 going on in our charter schools,
21 what's going on with our entities.
22 And even as we start to capture this
23 data that I described earlier about
24 our shooting violence, that's why you
25 heard me talk about grants. We're

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1 capturing that information, sharing
2 with that charter school system to
3 make sure that they're aware. Do we
4 have more work to do, absolutely.

5 I can tell you from my office
6 we can do a better job. There's no
7 question that my office can do a
8 better job. It's a lot, right. So
9 part of it I want to manage
10 expectations but also recognizing --
11 so even most recently with the issues
12 we're having down in Center City with
13 the kids conversion, we met with the
14 charter schools. The police
15 department did an excellent job of
16 bringing the charter schools from
17 that area down into their office at
18 their 400 North Broad.

19 I was in that session. The
20 police department was in that
21 session. The school leaders were in
22 that session for the public and
23 charter schools. And then we do
24 breakout meetings across the City
25 where we're meeting with all of our

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1 schools in geographical areas.

2 I know in East Division, in
3 particular where you're at, the
4 Inspector is doing a phenomenal job
5 now. He's going back to bringing all
6 of those entities together into his
7 school meeting, so we kind of merged
8 ours with theirs. And so, what he's
9 doing is really an excellent work.

10 So we're doing that work. We have to
11 do better though and make sure we're
12 constantly being focused and not
13 ignore the issues around what goes on
14 between our charters, but we continue
15 to be a work in progress and we
16 continue to try to be better in that
17 space.

18 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank
19 you. Is there a safety --

20 MS. LYNCH: So, Kevin, I
21 think --

22 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: --
23 officer at your charter school? Is
24 there a safety officer or your
25 position specifically on the charter

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1 school side that we should know of?

2 MR. BETHEL: Yes. So each of
3 the charters have their own entity at
4 their schools. I think maybe and
5 possibly Mastery Charter because they
6 have a cohort and maybe Universal.
7 But absent that, each of the schools
8 have their own kind of safety person
9 or whatever they title that in their
10 schools. And so, there is a number
11 of those that have that kind of
12 setup.

13 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: But not
14 at the Charter School Office at the
15 SPD -- at the School District
16 directly?

17 MR. BETHEL: No. We have the
18 Charter School -- the Chief of
19 Charter Schools here, Peng Chao, and
20 he has been the conduit for me to
21 make direct connections to the
22 broader network of charter schools.

23 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Awesome.
24 Thank you so much.

25 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: I'm back.

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1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Jim
2 Harrity, how are we sounding, Bro?

3 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: How do I
4 sound? Can you hear me now?

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
6 Absolutely. You sound crystal clear.

7 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: All
8 right. So I was glad to hear about
9 Councilman Curtis Jones' program
10 where he's going into the schools and
11 actually getting feedback from the
12 students. I don't know why we're not
13 doing that more in all the schools in
14 Philadelphia.

15 What would it take to start a
16 council at the schools to talk to
17 these kids, especially -- and not the
18 kids that are on city council -- on
19 the student council or the smart
20 kids. I would like to be able to get
21 in and talk to the kids that are most
22 at risk and find out what their
23 issues are and they would know. And
24 not only that, we would probably get
25 some more information about what's

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1 going on in the school.

2 I would like to see something
3 like that started and would love to
4 be involved in it. So I would like
5 to know how we could go about getting
6 something like that started citywide
7 in order to get feedback from the
8 students who are actually dealing
9 with this violence on a daily basis,
10 whether it's because of bullying or
11 whatever it is.

12 Also, I have questions about
13 how many counselors are you short in
14 the School District? And do you
15 think more counselors would help?
16 Thank you.

17 MS. LYNCH: So, Councilmember,
18 I'm going to let Jayme Banks speak to
19 the number of counselors that we have
20 and address that issue. But with
21 regard to hearing from our students,
22 I would share with you that we hear
23 from our students all the time.
24 Earlier in the testimony I think I --

25 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: I get

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1 that you hear from them all the time,
2 but we don't hear from them all the
3 time. I'd like to get it from the
4 mouth of the people who are actually
5 dealing with this problem, and the
6 kids that are mostly affected. This
7 is giving them a form of PTSD.
8 That's why I asked about the
9 counselors. I also would like to
10 know, if any, what is the protocol if
11 somebody needs to go speak to
12 somebody bigger like a psychologist
13 or psychiatrist?

14 MS. LYNCH: Counselors can
15 hear from students all the time. We
16 also have behavioral health services
17 within our schools. Every single one
18 of our schools has Intensive
19 Behavioral Health Services. We have
20 STEP services in many of our schools.
21 We spoke earlier to the mentoring
22 services because we try very hard to
23 have a student attached to or knowing
24 who the adult in their school is,
25 that when they see that adult, that

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1 adult is in tune with their emotional
2 needs.

3 We conduct a survey of our
4 students to judge their wellness on
5 an ongoing basis to see what issues
6 and concerns they're having within
7 the school. We can also invite
8 Councilmembers to visit students at
9 the Superintendent's Advisory
10 Council. We meet with students from
11 across the City, primarily middle
12 school and high schoolers on an
13 ongoing basis and they are frequently
14 visited by others who are interested
15 in hearing their ideas and opinions.

16 We talk to them about school
17 policies, everything from attendance
18 to behavior to discipline to how
19 they're feeling emotionally. And
20 most recently we have gone to several
21 schools and talked with students
22 about attendance and how we might be
23 able to increase attendance, but we
24 invite you to -- I would think one of
25 the best forms would be the Student

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1 Advisory Council or you can come and
2 you can sit and you can talk with
3 students from across the District.

4 Jayme, did you want to speak
5 to counselors?

6 DR. BANKS: Yes. In terms of
7 counselors, we had a very strong
8 hiring of the school year. We have,
9 and I'll get the confirmed number for
10 you after this hearing, but it's
11 definitely like under 20, 25
12 vacancies for the year. We filled
13 most of our spots.

14 In terms of your second
15 question was if more counselors would
16 be helpful, I believe that was your
17 question. I think in some schools it
18 could be counselors. In some schools
19 it's climate staff. In some schools
20 it's not necessarily one thing. I
21 say that because counselors need to
22 be able to do their job, right, and
23 they get pulled in many directions.

24 And so, some schools they have
25 enough counselors but maybe they need

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1 more support with the climate support
2 in their school. So I think that's a
3 varied question, but we are invested
4 in getting each school what they
5 specifically need and not necessarily
6 just to a catch-all, if everyone gets
7 this. I'd rather know what you
8 specifically need to make sure that
9 our kids can get the service they
10 need, and that's being more
11 intentional which is the theme across
12 our response today.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
14 you. I'm going to ask --

15 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Yeah --

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Go ahead,
17 Councilman Harrity.

18 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: No, I
19 thank them for their answers. And
20 I'd still like to try to figure out
21 how I could go about setting up a
22 committee. So maybe I could talk to
23 some of my colleagues to get -- I'd
24 like to hear from the kids and see
25 what they have to say and see what

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1 their fears and insecurities are
2 directly. The Student Council, I
3 think that's great and I would love
4 to come see that too.

5 But I'd like to get some kids
6 together that are actually at risk
7 and, you know, not your normal kids
8 that are involved and stuff like
9 this. I want to hear from the kids
10 that may necessarily have been
11 bullied or fearful or have food
12 insecurities, they're the kids I want
13 to hear from.

14 So I'd like to try to figure
15 out how we go about trying to set up
16 some kind of outreach where maybe --
17 and I would be willing to take up the
18 thing on it where I would go in or we
19 would go in and talk to these kids
20 and try to get an honest conversation
21 with them maybe by bringing one of
22 our young staffers with us that's
23 maybe a little closer in age maybe
24 they feel a little more comfortable
25 with. But there's severe problems,

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1 and everybody knows I believe it
2 starts with our education system.

3 And we've got to find a better way to
4 reach these kids. But thank you.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
6 very much.

7 Just in the essence of time,
8 I'm going to ask for the Clerk to
9 please call the next panel.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: (Gestured).

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
12 Councilman Jones, can you be very
13 brief at the request of --

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm going
15 to be extremely brief. I'm
16 inviting --

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- the
18 sponsor asked if we can move to the
19 next panel, so we want to continue to
20 move things forward.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'll be
22 very brief, Mr. Chairman. And this
23 is an exciting discussion. Thank you
24 for having this hearing.

25 I'm going to invite -- I've

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1 already sent invitations to the
2 members of this Committee along with
3 Member Bethel to join us at our
4 7:00 a.m. roll call so that you can
5 see the format, structure and also
6 ask some of the participating schools
7 who've experienced gun violence, both
8 Roxborough and Overbrook, how this
9 thing can overlap and what its
10 utility is.

11 So I've already sent you that
12 invitation, Member Harrity, Member
13 Lozada as well. All right. So that
14 was brief.

15 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: (Gestured
16 thumbs up).

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
18 very much.

19 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank
20 you, Councilman. Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
22 you.

23 Will the Clerk please call the
24 next panel.

25 THE CLERK: Next we have Tyler

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1 McDaniels, Kendra Van de Water and
2 Anton Moore.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Hey,
4 Kendra.

5 MS. VAN DE WATER: How are
6 you?

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm good.
8 Just state your name for the record.
9 Good to see you as well, Anton Moore,
10 Unity in the Community. Just state
11 y'all name for the record and please
12 begin your testimony.

13 MS. VAN DE WATER: First,
14 we're waiting for the young person.
15 His name in the chat is Man-Man. If
16 he could be added too, Tyler
17 McDaniels.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
19 Absolutely. Brett, can we make sure
20 Man-Man -- there goes Man-Man.
21 How are you doing, Mr. Tyler?

22 MR. McDANIELS: (Muted).

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You're on
24 mute at the moment.

25 MS. VAN DE WATER: You want us

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1 all to say our names first or each
2 person that testifies will go?

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Each
4 person when they testify just for the
5 record. And go ahead and start.

6 MS. VAN DE WATER: Man-Man,
7 you can go first.

8 MR. McDANIELS: (Muted).

9 MS. VAN DE WATER: You're on
10 mute. Unmute your phone.

11 MR. McDANIELS: Y'all hear me?

12 MS. VAN DE WATER: Yes.

13 MR. McDANIELS: How y'all
14 doing. My name is Tyler McDaniels.
15 I'm 19. I live in West Philadelphia.
16 And, like, me and the people that I
17 had to grow up with, the way we grew
18 up with, how we grew up fast in our
19 environment because of the gun
20 violence and the shootings in the
21 City, on behalf of the things that
22 happened to us when we were young
23 before we knew what was really going
24 on, before to actually express
25 ourselves, me and my (inaudible) we

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1 never really got to live in the same
2 household, you get what I'm saying.
3 So, like, that takes a toll on a kid
4 being locked up for almost four
5 years, in and out, going in and out.

6 And to say that I've been on
7 house arrest since I was 14. I done
8 got shot before. I done been in
9 situations to whereas though you
10 don't know how to think, you don't
11 know how to move when certain things
12 go down and you're scared, you get
13 what I'm saying. Then you got YEAH
14 Philly, they helped me achieve a lot
15 within the two years they've known
16 me. The two, three years, they have
17 known me, they've been here for me.
18 I accomplished a lot of things that I
19 ever accomplished.

20 Being inside the PJJSC, I
21 never really accomplished nothing.
22 They didn't have -- they didn't help
23 me. They didn't come and they
24 didn't -- no judge ever asked me what
25 can I do, what can we do to help you

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1 get to where you want to be in life,
2 what can we do to help you get away
3 from the violence, what can we do to
4 help you and your family get close.
5 They don't ask us stuff like that.
6 My PO never asked me nothing like
7 that. Like, they did want to -- they
8 not doing nothing that's beneficial
9 to us, but they want their job, they
10 want their name to look good for
11 their superior.

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Is that
13 the whole testimony or did he step
14 off for a second?

15 MS. VAN DE WATER: Man-Man --

16 MR. McDANIELS: Yeah, that's
17 it.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
19 you, Man-Man.

20 MR. McDANIELS: You're
21 welcome.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
23 you.

24 MR. McDANIELS: You're
25 welcome.

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1 MS. VAN DE WATER: Thank you.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Next,

3 Kendra.

4 MS. VAN DE WATER: And I'm

5 about to start now. Hi. My name is

6 Kendra Van de Water, and I'm the

7 Executive Director of Youth

8 Empowerment for Advancement Hangout

9 better known around the City as YEAH

10 Philly. We're a community-based

11 organization working in new ways with

12 young people ages 15 to 24 in West

13 and Southwest Philadelphia with a

14 special focus on those in the legal

15 system charged with allegedly

16 committing a violent crime.

17 We work to keep young people

18 in the community with services

19 instead of having them sent away to

20 state placement or incarceration.

21 And since our inception, we stood

22 independent from systems because

23 we've been able to do more for the

24 young people. We serve in more

25 nuanced ways and with our money.

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1 Over the years, this
2 independence has caused issues with
3 the court system and probation
4 services because their lack of
5 services have started to be exposed
6 and young people we work with have
7 started to break the cycle of
8 incarceration.

9 Youth who are adjudicated
10 delinquent for gun crimes are not
11 given real support to get out of the
12 legal system or address
13 rehabilitation and accountability.
14 Court programs are solely focused on
15 punishment and the same people are
16 cycling in and out of the legal
17 system because the help is not
18 addressing the root causes of the
19 problems they have.

20 Young people have infinite
21 terms of probation and house arrest
22 because there's nothing for them to
23 work towards, and judges and
24 probation officers move the goalpost
25 based on how they feel with no

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1 accountability. It's not uncommon
2 for a young person to be on house
3 arrest for a year and accomplish
4 nothing productive during that same
5 year.

6 In fact, these terms have no
7 rehabilitation and always make a
8 young person worse in terms of their
9 behavior, their mental health and
10 their overall well-being. Probation
11 officers are workers from court-
12 mandated programs giving young people
13 phone numbers or flyers and telling
14 them to go get the support on their
15 own instead of doing it together with
16 them. These things are not helpful
17 when young people in these
18 circumstances need really intensive
19 support and lack many skills to get
20 things done on their own.

21 The courts and probation
22 services continue to perpetuate the
23 cycle of violence by forcing young
24 people into court-mandated programs
25 that do nothing for them and have

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1 high recidivism rates of up to 80
2 percent according to their own data.
3 Additionally, the court risk and
4 safety assessments are only based on
5 whether to detain a young person or
6 not versus being a holistic
7 assessment for their overall lives.

8 Where's the data for the
9 court-mandated programs that the
10 courts are forcing people to attend?
11 Why are we not sending young people
12 to programs within their own
13 neighborhoods that they identify to
14 join with their support system? Why
15 do we continue to only send young
16 people to court-mandated programs
17 with high recidivism rates, yet young
18 people continue to not even get the
19 basics of what they need?

20 We are paying about \$900 per
21 day per youth when they are sent away
22 for them to still come back to our
23 communities with nothing and no
24 changes. The courts are not being
25 held accountable for being the

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1 catalyst to poor outcomes and the
2 City really needs to change this.
3 Over the past few years our
4 government has also given hundreds of
5 millions of dollars to programs in
6 our City for violence reduction. Yet
7 the courts are also refusing to work
8 with these same community programs if
9 they aren't directly contracted with
10 them. This is a huge disconnect that
11 isn't discussed.

12 This money is essential to the
13 well-being of our City if invested
14 properly and will continue to be
15 wasted if the programs are not
16 addressing the largest needs when it
17 comes to violence and if every
18 program is not able to support the
19 population that everyone is saying
20 needs the most support. Not only are
21 these questions we should be asking
22 ourselves, but people in power need
23 to be doing something concrete about
24 it.

25 When it comes to solutions,

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1 we've been saying the same thing for
2 years that our neighborhoods and our
3 young people need concrete investment
4 right now and not later. Young
5 people need to have options that
6 address their individual needs and
7 not be forced to attend programs that
8 have financial incentives to keep
9 them in the cycle of violence and the
10 cycle of the legal system.

11 The reality of our City and
12 the needs of people right now mean
13 that programs have to address the
14 societal ills that plague those who
15 are adjudicated for gun crimes, like
16 poverty, access to real
17 opportunities, mental health needs
18 and holistic health and wellness
19 needs and being self-paced and
20 according to the individual.

21 YEAH Philly was created to be
22 astronomically different in these
23 ways and our outcomes show that.
24 Over 18 months of piloting our
25 Violent Crime Initiative in 2021, our

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1 services got 46 percent of young
2 people completely out of the system
3 and kept 72 percent of young people
4 in the community without re-arrest.

5 While we're not serving
6 thousands of individuals due to the
7 intensive support people get, we know
8 our services are of high quality and
9 meeting the actual needs of young
10 people with violent charges against
11 them. Our services are free to
12 individuals. Nobody is forced to
13 join our program and there's not an
14 organization that has produced the
15 outcomes we've had with this specific
16 population. We spend an average of
17 \$10,000 per young person just for
18 general services alone and they have
19 the autonomy to choose what they
20 want.

21 Programs need to be ensuring
22 that young people have vital
23 documents, that young people have
24 better skills through career
25 exploration and not dead-end jobs.

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1 They need to be ensuring that young
2 people and their families have their
3 bills paid, have groceries and have
4 houses that they're able to live in,
5 ensuring young people have access to
6 trauma and grief counseling from
7 people who look like them and places
8 that young people can go after hours
9 and can interact with people who love
10 them in a place where they can be
11 themselves.

12 We know that the neighborhoods
13 with higher rates of young people
14 committing crimes have not been
15 invested in and leadership has
16 meetings over and over to discuss
17 solutions that are talked about on a
18 regular basis. The City has a duty
19 to invest properly into young people
20 and make sure that we're able to live
21 in a place free of harm and full of
22 opportunity, and we cannot keep
23 saying we want to reduce violence but
24 we don't invest in the right things.

25 Data has showed us for years

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1 what people need and we are
2 continuing to invest in the school-
3 to-prison pipeline without
4 accountability. And if the young --
5 if we want to change the trajectory
6 of young people and the safety within
7 our City, we have to start listening
8 to young people and invest directly
9 in what they need to get beyond
10 survival. Thank you.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
12 very much. Anton Moore.

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
15 Mr. Moore, are you there?

16 (No response.)

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: He may be
18 having technical difficulties. If
19 that's the case, we will have
20 questions by Councilwoman Jamie
21 Gauthier, then Councilwoman Quetcy
22 Lozada. And when Anton gets back on,
23 we'll let him chime in with his
24 remarks.

25 Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier.

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1 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
2 you, Mr. Chair.

3 I wanted to thank Man-Man for
4 joining us and talking about his
5 story. I'm really sorry to hear that
6 you came in contact with so many City
7 systems but didn't get the help that
8 you needed. And I wanted to ask you
9 a few questions if you're still
10 there.

11 MR. McDANIELS: Yes, you can
12 ask some questions.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.
14 Wonderful. If you feel comfortable
15 answering this, can you give us your
16 opinion on why young people choose to
17 carry guns?

18 MR. McDANIELS: Yes. You can
19 hear me?

20 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes, I
21 can hear you.

22 MR. McDANIELS: Young people
23 choose to carry guns because you can
24 get shot -- you can die by living the
25 right life. I can be doing

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1 everything that I'm supposed to be
2 doing since I came out the womb. I
3 can have a job. Everything could
4 have been passed down to me and in
5 certain areas in Philly, I can get
6 shot or robbed just because I got on
7 a certain thing or just because
8 somebody don't like something that
9 I'm doing, so these kids want to
10 protect themselves.

11 Then you got the rappers, you
12 got certain rappers that rap about
13 certain things, so they think that
14 it's cool. Then you got our
15 environment. We grew up watching
16 what people do. We grew up watching
17 people sell drugs on the corner or
18 carry this or do that. But when we
19 do it, it's like, oh, it's -- then
20 they blame it on us. It's not like
21 we the ones that's getting the guns.

22 We're not putting everything
23 that's here. We're not the ones
24 that's bringing the guns inside
25 Philly. We got to get them some way.

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1 It's not just appearing out of
2 nowhere, but we the ones that get
3 accused of our situation or we the
4 ones that get punished for wanting to
5 protect ourselves.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I
7 understand, so for safety. You have
8 a lot of people in this hearing with
9 you who are elected officials, heads
10 of City departments. If you could
11 advise all of us to work on one thing
12 in the next three months that would
13 help young people and change the
14 dynamic of young people being
15 involved in violence, what would that
16 be?

17 MR. McDANIELS: Try to put
18 yourselves in their shoes. Like, try
19 to -- don't just want to talk about
20 doing better for something, like
21 really go and do, like, really show
22 that you went ahead and you want to
23 be the person, you want to be the
24 people that's going to help them get
25 out of the situation. You can say,

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1 oh, I'm going to do this or I'm going
2 to do that, but you got to show it.
3 You got to really be out there with
4 them.

5 Some of us kids need someone
6 that's going to tell us, yo, like,
7 come on, that's not what this is
8 about, you don't have to do this, I
9 got you. But we don't have that type
10 of support. We're not fi -- I'm not
11 financially successful. They don't
12 even teach us about that inside the
13 system. They don't teach us about
14 that in school. They don't teach us
15 about getting, building a bank
16 account. They don't teach us how to
17 buy a house. They don't teach us how
18 to invest. They don't do none of
19 the -- they don't teach us nothing
20 that we need to know in order to
21 survive. Yeah, they do teach us
22 certain things, math or reading, all
23 right, that's cool. But what about
24 the things that's essential for
25 living.

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1 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
2 you so much.

3 Mr. Chair, I see that Anton is
4 on. I don't know if we wanted to let
5 him testify.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
9 Mr. Moore, you can give your
10 testimony.

11 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:
12 Councilman, can I just step in really
13 quick because I'm not going to be
14 able to stay for the whole thing?

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

16 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: And I'm
17 really sorry. I apologize. I just
18 want to make a comment.

19 First of all, I also want to
20 commend Man-Man for telling us his
21 story, for keeping it real with us,
22 for being honest with us because
23 that's what we need to hear. We need
24 to hear more of young men and women
25 like him coming to people like us who

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1 are elected, who are elected to be
2 their voices. But if we don't know
3 specifically what their needs are,
4 then we can't do a good job at that.
5 So I commend you for coming on here
6 and speaking to us.

7 And then to Ms. Kendra, that
8 is the most commonsense testimony I
9 have heard I think since I arrived in
10 City Council. It is absolutely true,
11 right. We have to be able to address
12 young people and teach them about
13 quality of life. There's a lot of
14 people that can teach them about
15 science and math and history. But if
16 we don't teach people the basics of
17 how to live a -- it doesn't have to
18 be an extreme millionaire's type of
19 life, but a decent quality of life, a
20 respectable quality of life, we're
21 not teaching them anything.

22 And so, I just want to commend
23 programs like YEAH for being on the
24 ground and for connecting with young
25 people where they are regardless of

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1 who they are and what their
2 background or their history has been.
3 We need more of that. We need to
4 look at the programs that we're
5 funding through these anti-violence
6 programs and figure out are they
7 really delivering the services that
8 they've committed to deliver. And if
9 they're not, what do we do to
10 reallocate those dollars.

11 And I don't think that we do
12 that enough. I think that we
13 identify programs that say they're
14 going to do something. And when we
15 realize that they're not doing it, we
16 kind of stay silent. And so, I am
17 committed to doing better or being
18 better at that, and I'm committed to
19 figuring out how we put systems in
20 place to allow us to reallocate those
21 dollars. Thank you.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You're
23 welcome.

24 Councilman -- I said
25 Councilman. Anton Moore, Executive

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1 Director of Unity in the Community.

2 MR. MOORE: Good morning,
3 everyone. Thank you, Councilman
4 Johnson, Councilwoman Gauthier for
5 inviting me on this panel discussion
6 this morning, and I see my colleague
7 Kendra as well who does great work
8 with YEAH Philly. My name is Anton
9 Moore, Executive Director of Unity in
10 the Community.

11 One of our signature programs
12 initiatives to reduce gun violence is
13 teaching kids carpentry and also
14 providing them with therapy on a
15 weekly basis. One of the things that
16 I'm noticing, even with our young
17 people as we work with them and talk
18 to them, as Kendra talked about is
19 the need for investment.

20 A lot of times we take on
21 these kids and we bring these kids
22 into the fold, but a lot of these
23 kids need to be focused on. A lot of
24 times they're dealing with
25 issues when they show up to our

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1 programs that needs a holistic
2 approach.

3 I have a young kid in my
4 program whose family is nearly
5 homeless, you know what I mean. And
6 when you look at those things, you
7 see them and you see the things that
8 they're going through. But then you
9 have to take it up a notch and find
10 out what the family is actually
11 dealing with. So we end up bringing
12 in the family and speaking to the
13 actual schools that they actually
14 attend to try to work with these
15 young people.

16 I think the City of
17 Philadelphia even looking at what
18 we're dealing with, with the gun
19 violence when you're working in your
20 neighborhood on a daily basis, you
21 tend to know who the shooters are and
22 who are the next round of kids that
23 are up next to get involved in that.

24 And I think that the City
25 needs to look at the model of, okay,

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1 these are the shooters, this is what
2 they're involved in, but who are the
3 kids that's coming up after them
4 that's going to be involved in that.
5 And that's what we tend to do is, you
6 know, I adjusted our program to say,
7 okay, we have the kids right here but
8 who are the kids coming up.

9 I know the model for the City
10 is 15 to 16. But now as you can see,
11 the kids are starting out at the age
12 of 13 now that are getting guns, that
13 are stealing cars and different
14 things like that. And now that we're
15 starting to take on those 13-year-
16 olds and provide them with the
17 resources that they need because they
18 tend to look up to those older guys
19 that are coming up. I looked at a
20 young kid's phone that's in my
21 program, and I'm just looking at his
22 phone. He has somebody who's a
23 shooter in our neighborhood that's
24 his screensaver.

25 Then I started listening to

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1 the music, you know, we're just
2 sitting there having a conversation
3 before class started, and he was able
4 to pinpoint some things to me and
5 open my eyes up to some of the things
6 that's going on. So when we're
7 taking this approach, I think the
8 City needs to adjust that age from 16
9 and start to look at the kids that
10 are 13 years old because now it's
11 starting to make sense that a kid
12 could be 13 today, but in two weeks
13 could be that shooter tomorrow, and
14 that's what you're looking at.

15 I have a friend in Baltimore,
16 I have friends in Chicago that's
17 doing this very same work and they're
18 noticing the same thing. So being
19 able to be on the ground, provide
20 these kids with the needed resources
21 but also understanding where they're
22 coming from and getting them the
23 resources that they actually need.

24 And I'll tell you, and I think
25 me and Kendra had this conversation,

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1 this is a tough task doing this work
2 because it becomes overwhelming. A
3 lot of times we are the advocates
4 that are actually on the ground
5 working with these young people and
6 it becomes tough in the process
7 because you're dealing with not only
8 just the kids but the parents as
9 well, and needing those needed
10 resources to have the staff to
11 actually deal with this stuff is very
12 important, so we're focusing on the
13 young people from a 13 to 21
14 perspective and then working with the
15 older adults from 21 to 34 with our
16 resource center as well.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Well,
18 thank you, Anton and Kendra and
19 Man-Man. We thank y'all for your
20 advocacy.

21 Councilman Harrity has a
22 question or comment. Councilman
23 Harrity.

24 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: I mean --
25 yes, can you hear me?

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1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, hear
2 you loud and clear.

3 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: All
4 right. Good, we're not having a
5 problem again.

6 Well, first, I'd like to thank
7 the two young people, Man-Man and
8 Kendra, for being honest with us
9 and -- I got that, right? I see my
10 colleagues laughing, right. Yeah,
11 okay.

12 MS. VAN DE WATER: I'm
13 smiling --

14 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: She
15 just looks -- she's been blessed and
16 she looks young, but she's grown and
17 she leads YEAH Philly.

18 MR. MOORE: Young people.

19 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: God bless
20 her because she looks great. I hope
21 I get a little bit better looking
22 with age. So I appreciate your
23 testimony. Thank you so much.

24 And, Anton, I know what you
25 do. I've been there. I mean, the

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1 event you had last week with NOMO and
2 Reform trying to reach out to the
3 community to let even our
4 ex-offenders know that, listen, there
5 is a place in our society for you and
6 that's what we need to do.

7 And I'd love to see some more
8 programs like NOMO does in my
9 neighborhood for the kids. We got to
10 get these groups to branch out. And
11 YEAH, I'd like to offer my support to
12 you too. I mean, I'm a big advocate
13 for mentors for our children. And I
14 said it at many things, if we don't
15 get them before the age of 12 or 13
16 in my neighborhood, the corner boys
17 are going to get them.

18 And that makes me sad because
19 to be honest, I talk to these kids.
20 They're good kids. And that's why
21 I'm advocating that we start more
22 conversations with these young people
23 that are at risk and figure out what
24 they think and what they feel we
25 should be doing. Because if we

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1 really do believe that they're our
2 future, we need to start supplying
3 them with a future. So I thank you
4 for everything. Thank you.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
6 you.

7 Again, as we wrap up this
8 panel, Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I just
10 have one last question for our
11 advocates. First, thank you both for
12 the work that you were doing. This
13 is the work, right. You all have
14 close trusted relationships with
15 young people who are in the path of
16 violence. And I thank you for your
17 work and also your recommendations.

18 I wanted to ask before we move
19 on, I imagine that you are engaging
20 with young people that have touched
21 one or more City systems, whether
22 that be the School District, PJJSC,
23 DHS. Do you have one thing that you
24 would recommend that the City
25 incorporate? When we are trying to

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1 service young people before they get
2 to the point of being involved in
3 violence, if there was one thing that
4 we could do better, what would that
5 look like?

6 MS. VAN DE WATER: Can I give
7 you three?

8 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: You
9 can give me three, yes.

10 MS. VAN DE WATER: So I know
11 your office helped push for investing
12 30 million in cleaning up vacant lots
13 and trash and the blight, I think
14 that's a huge thing. We know that
15 research shows that when your
16 neighborhoods are cleaner, violence
17 is reduced. That is a huge thing,
18 making sure that the City does that.

19 A big one as well for us is
20 implementing -- every school should
21 have conflict resolution and a peer
22 mediation program. That's
23 low-hanging fruit. That doesn't take
24 a huge amount of money. That's
25 something that could be done. And

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1 then I think the City can have more
2 public spaces for teens and young
3 people to just be.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
5 you so much and thank you for
6 providing that in our community.

7 Anton.

8 MR. MOORE: I think -- and I
9 think Kendra hit it on the nose too
10 as well, but I think at least once a
11 week kids should be allowed to learn
12 a trade or go out to a job site and
13 learn different things. I think
14 sometimes being trapped inside of
15 school is tough for kids. Just
16 imagine if you're trapped inside of a
17 building for 40 hours a week. A lot
18 of these kids tend to go off and do
19 something different.

20 So one thing that I would love
21 for them to do at least once a week,
22 allow even if between 8th and 12th
23 grade, that they be given the
24 opportunity to go learn a trade or a
25 career field that gets them outside

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1 the building. In addition to that,
2 something happened maybe about three
3 months ago. And again, Kendra made a
4 good point about this as well. When
5 we went to court with one of our
6 young people, they wouldn't let the
7 advocate actually in the courtroom,
8 and I think that was a big problem
9 because the parent was kind of lost
10 about the situation because she
11 didn't quite understand it and I had
12 a better understanding of the
13 situation working with the young
14 people, but they wouldn't allow us to
15 go into the courtroom.

16 And I think that the City
17 should do a better job working with
18 the President Judge over there to
19 allow advocates in the courtroom to
20 give that family the support on
21 things that they don't understand.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I
23 agree with you. Thank you so much.
24 Thanks to both of you. Again, thanks
25 to Man-Man for speaking with us

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1 today.

2 And thanks, Mr. Chair.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
4 you. Again, thank you Kendra, thank
5 you, Anton, I'll also thank you,
6 Man-Man, for taking time out of y'all
7 schedule to be on this call. But
8 Man-Man, also for just having the
9 courage and coming on and
10 participating and just being totally
11 transparent about your life. And so,
12 I thank all of you and this is
13 definitely good information for us to
14 look at in terms of how we support
15 our young people.

16 Will the Clerk please call the
17 next panel.

18 MS. VAN DE WATER: Thank you.

19 THE CLERK: For the next panel
20 we have Deputy Commissioner Stanford.
21 We have Robert Listenbee and we have
22 Faustino Castro-Jimenez.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: (Muted).

24 THE CLERK: Mr. Chair, you are
25 muted.

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1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
2 you. We're going to ask for John
3 Stanford to start us off. Please
4 state your name, title for the record
5 and please begin.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER STANFORD:
7 Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. Good
8 afternoon, Councilperson Gauthier and
9 all Councilmembers. I'm First Deputy
10 Commissioner of Philadelphia Police
11 Department John Stanford. I am
12 standing in for Police Commissioner
13 Danielle Outlaw and I'm also joined
14 by other members of the
15 Commissioner's executive team here
16 today.

17 I'll begin with the
18 PowerPoint, and thank you for having
19 us as a part of the conversation.
20 Some powerful testimony has already
21 been provided and hopefully we can
22 add to the conversation. So I'll
23 start with the presentation we have
24 here.

25 Next slide. All right. So

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1 just to start off where we are so far
2 this year, since 2014 homicides and
3 shooting victims have continued to
4 increase across the City. But at the
5 end of 2022, homicides and shooting
6 victims were down 8 percent and 3
7 percent respectively when compared to
8 2021. And so far this year,
9 homicides are down 11 percent and
10 shooting victims are down 15 percent.
11 So we're continuing to see that
12 trending in a good direction, a
13 positive direction.

14 Next slide please. So
15 continuing the conversation around
16 our young people that are involved in
17 some of the activity that we have
18 seen, juvenile involvement in
19 shootings has slightly increased
20 compared to 2015 for both
21 victimization as well as offending.
22 6 percent of the victims were
23 juvenile in 2015. However, we've
24 seen that number increase in 2021.
25 In 2022, that number increased to 9

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1 to 10 percent.

2 7 percent of the shooting
3 victim offenders were juveniles back
4 in 2015. And also again, seeing that
5 number continue to increase slightly,
6 in 2022 it was around 12 percent.

7 And so, while the juvenile trend is
8 concerning, the bulk of the juvenile
9 victims -- the bulk of shooting
10 victims, I'm sorry, and perpetrators
11 continue to be in that age range of
12 18 to 34.

13 Next slide please. So again,
14 seeing some of the percents of
15 juvenile arrests for carjacking, that
16 increase starting in 2020, peaking in
17 2021. However, the percent of
18 juvenile arrests for other robberies
19 has decreased since 2019. There's
20 been also a slight increase in the
21 percent of juveniles arrested for
22 VUFA. The percent of juveniles
23 arrested for AG assaults has
24 fluctuated between 5.7 percent of
25 arrests in 2021 and 9 percent in

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1 2019.

2 Next slide please. So again,
3 looking at some of the juvenile
4 felony incidents and locations, in
5 2022 juveniles were arrested
6 throughout Philadelphia. However,
7 the highest number of juvenile
8 incidents were concentrated in the
9 areas of the 15th to 22nd and 24th.
10 Collectively, those districts
11 accounted for about 23 percent of the
12 juvenile felony arrests.

13 And again, just a note on the
14 hotspots of juvenile felony incidents
15 in Center City. We have seen an
16 increase along that Market Street
17 corridor, and that includes the SEPTA
18 Market-Frankford Line which runs
19 essentially through parts of West
20 Philly. And you can see just using
21 an example of the 19th District, 109
22 incidents with a juvenile felony
23 arrest making up about 6 percent of
24 overall felony arrests in that
25 district. So you can see there how

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1 that has an impact.

2 Next slide please. Juvenile
3 shooting victims: In 2022, there
4 were 217 juvenile shooting victims
5 which make up about 10 percent of all
6 shooting victims in Philadelphia.
7 The districts with the most victims
8 were the 22nd District, the 24th
9 District and the 19th District.

10 About 23 percent of the juvenile
11 victims were victimized during the
12 dates of summer break. I believe
13 that was mentioned earlier in the
14 testimony today around the month of
15 June, July and August, with the
16 highest numbers between June 14th and
17 August 28th, and they were the top
18 five among the top five months for
19 juvenile shootings and victimization
20 aligning with our typical seasonality
21 of gun violence that we see in the
22 City.

23 Additionally, 42 percent of
24 juvenile victims were shot during the
25 hours of 9:00 p.m. and 4:59 a.m, with

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1 27 percent of the victimization
2 occurring between the hours of
3 10:00 p.m. and 2:00 a.m. Again,
4 similar victimization patterns also
5 hold true for adults within the
6 summer months and the late night
7 hours being the most common for
8 victimization.

9 Next slide. So again, as was
10 mentioned earlier today, the leading
11 cause of death among children and
12 adolescents, so in 2020 according to
13 the CDC, firearm-related injuries
14 overtook motor vehicle crashes as the
15 leading cause of death among children
16 adolescents ages 1 through 19 in the
17 United States, and Philadelphia is
18 very similar to that. For the
19 leading cause of death in juveniles
20 in Philadelphia, firearm-related
21 injuries in Philadelphia has been
22 nearly the same as unintentional
23 injuries looking back to like 2013.
24 However, since that time frame and
25 since 2019, the deaths have increased

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1 in terms of firearm-related by 156
2 percent.

3 Next slide. So truancy is one
4 of the issues that we've seen in this
5 City. And in 2022 our truancy
6 violations occur most frequently in
7 the 2nd District, the 19th District
8 and the 39th District. The most
9 common hour for police response was
10 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. And then in
11 2022 the most truancy violations
12 occurred in the months of March,
13 November and October. The most
14 frequent day for truancy in 2022 was
15 Wednesdays followed by Thursdays.

16 Next slide please. Curfew
17 violations also an issue for us in
18 the City. In 2022, curfew violations
19 occurred most frequently in the 12th
20 District, the 39th District and the
21 18th District. Most common hour for
22 police response was between
23 10:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. followed by
24 11:00 p.m. to midnight and then
25 12:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. being the

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1 most frequent times. In 2022, our
2 curfew violations peaked during the
3 summer months with 33 percent of all
4 violations occurring during the
5 months of June, July and August.

6 Next slide please. So as many
7 of you know, during the beginning of
8 the year we essentially re-analyzed
9 our Pinpoint strategy looking to
10 enhance it, focusing on re-aligning
11 45 grids across the City, across all
12 the police districts across the City
13 as it relates to our Pinpoint grids.
14 However, with the focus being on the
15 22nd, 24th, 25th and 39th Districts,
16 as that made up for 43 percent of our
17 gun violence.

18 And so, as a part of that
19 focus four districts received
20 additional officers through newly
21 graduate recruits as well as
22 administrative officers and some of
23 our nonpatrol assignments being
24 temporarily re-assigned to those
25 districts. And so, some of the

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1 notable reduction in those four
2 districts when looking at the same
3 60-day period compared to this time
4 last year, 29 percent reduction in
5 robbery gun in those districts versus
6 17 percent reduction across the City.
7 A 19 percent reduction in aggravated
8 assaults with gun in those four
9 districts versus the 6 percent
10 citywide, and a 54 percent reduction
11 in carjackings in those four
12 districts versus a 40 percent
13 decrease citywide.

14 And so, again knowing that
15 again while they are achievements in
16 the right direction, this is also a
17 result of a number of different
18 strategies and tactics implemented,
19 not just the officers being in those
20 districts just by itself, but also
21 having some sound tactics and
22 strategy in place as well.

23 Next slide. So as a part of
24 many of our initiatives we do, again
25 looking at ways to get violent

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1 offenders in custody or off the
2 street, one of those methods is
3 looking at young people that are
4 involved in the most heinous of
5 crimes. And so, our Office of
6 Violence Prevention Task Force which
7 includes a number of different
8 individuals, members from the
9 violence prevention partnership from
10 Probation, Juvenile Enforcement Team
11 from Probation, Adult Probation our
12 Juvenile Enforcement Team for the
13 Department, the Sheriff's Department,
14 the Warrant Unit, U.S Marshals
15 Fugitive Task Force, Office of
16 Attorney General and overall our
17 Police Department.

18 They go out several times a
19 month. And in 2021, you can see 188
20 attempts with 36 apprehensions, 2 of
21 those which include homicide. In
22 2022, 291 attempts with 44
23 apprehensions. And then so far this
24 year, 111 attempts with 21
25 apprehensions. And again, this is

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1 just to show some of the work
2 focusing on again the most violent
3 individuals and trying to remove them
4 from the equation of creating more
5 violence within our City.

6 So again, as a part of all of
7 what we do, our community engagement
8 and inclusion piece is obviously
9 throughout the City. Our department
10 will continue our efforts to include
11 all, but that also includes our
12 juveniles. And so, in coordination
13 with other City agencies, we'll
14 continue that positive engagement
15 with our young people to also provide
16 resources and alternatives where we
17 can, all in an effort to continue to
18 promote a safer city.

19 And so, all 21 Districts will
20 be hosting events throughout the
21 summer. And many of those events
22 again we advertise on our social
23 media pages, whether it be the PPD
24 social media page or the Districts'
25 social media pages. But events such

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1 as movie nights, community block
2 parties as well as events such as
3 National Night Out as well as the
4 districts will continue to hold their
5 monthly Community meetings.

6 Also, each of the districts,
7 they have a unique plan for their
8 geographical areas. And in those
9 plans, it also incorporates community
10 engagement not just around their
11 Pinpoint coverage but also other
12 quality-of-life issues, focusing on
13 the recreation centers, playstreets
14 as well as covering those pools in
15 the summertime.

16 And so, Patrol will continue
17 to work with the Recreation
18 Department to make sure that we
19 increase our visibility at the
20 centers across the City and again,
21 obviously the focus being on some of
22 the pools and basketball courts and
23 basketball games and other events,
24 large-scale events that we know are
25 happening at many of those locations

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1 will all be monitored as well as in
2 addition to our Community Relations
3 Unit, who also oversee the Police
4 Athletic League, the Police Explorers
5 Program and the Youth Advisory
6 Council will continue to do a lot of
7 the positive work that they've been
8 doing in terms of hosting meetings
9 and engaging our young people across
10 the City.

11 Next slide please. And this
12 is our final slide. Again, just to
13 highlight some of the youth programs,
14 our Police Athletic League will kick
15 off its summer event on June 19th
16 collaborating with the New York
17 Police Department in a flag football
18 game, continuing to establish a
19 summer golf camp hopefully to get
20 underway.

21 They have an annual PAL
22 Day/PECO Day at the zoo as well as
23 many of the centers host inhouse
24 basketball camps for many of our
25 young people Monday through Friday.

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1 And last year we saw a very
2 successful initiative where over
3 1,000 young people were enrolled in
4 many of the summer activities at our
5 PAL centers. And so, to try to
6 continue that success, starting June
7 19th PAL will have extended hours at
8 10 of their locations. And again,
9 you can visit phillypal.org for more
10 information on the specific
11 locations.

12 We also have our Police
13 Explorers program again who do events
14 planned throughout the summer months
15 all year long. Again, we'll include
16 our cadet training, a youth police
17 camp, summer training week with State
18 Police and their youth camp as well
19 as bike training. And again, you can
20 get information on that through
21 ppdexplorers.org.

22 And as I mentioned previously,
23 you have the Youth Advisory
24 Commission that will continue to run
25 during the school year and they will

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1 extend their programs through the
2 summer months as well. And so, you
3 can find information on that by
4 reaching out to any one of the
5 community relations officers in any
6 one of our 21 Districts that can put
7 you in communication with our
8 Community Relations Unit.

9 And as I stated before, again
10 Community Relations Unit will
11 continue their positive work doing
12 pop-up resource tables, National
13 Night Out, attending summer block
14 parties and just again partnering
15 with other organizations both within
16 the City and surrounding areas to
17 provide additional resources for our
18 young people. And that concludes my
19 presentation at this time.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
21 you, Mr. Stanford. I appreciate your
22 hard work and your dedication.

23 Mr. Listenbee, can you state
24 your name for the record and begin,
25 sir.

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1 MR. LISTENBEE: Oh, yes.
2 Thank you very much, Councilmember
3 and Chairman of the Committee,
4 Councilmember Gauthier. My name is
5 Bob Listenbee. I've worked in the
6 City for many years. I was a Public
7 Defender and head of the Juvenile
8 Unit of the Public Defender's Office.
9 I was there for 27 years, head of the
10 unit for 16.

11 Following my work there, I was
12 selected by the President of the
13 United States to head up the Office
14 of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency
15 Prevention where I served for four
16 years working on juvenile justice
17 policy for the nation. When I
18 returned to Philadelphia, I worked as
19 a Stoneleigh Fellow for the
20 Stoneleigh Foundation working with
21 homeless youth trying to develop
22 mechanisms for providing them with
23 their basic documents so that they
24 could have identification for a
25 multitude of purposes. And I've been

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1 with the DA's Office as First
2 Assistant District Attorney since
3 2018.

4 To begin with, I'd just like
5 to point out a few basic facts about
6 Philadelphia's juvenile justice
7 system. It has been declining in
8 size for some years using 2012 as a
9 baseline. In 2012, there were 5,187
10 youth arrests in Philadelphia. By
11 the year 2022, that number had
12 declined to 1635, so we've had a very
13 dramatic decline in the number of
14 arrests. This decline in youth
15 arrests is the same across the nation
16 so we're not by ourselves in that
17 regard.

18 In addition, there's been a 47
19 percent decline in youth arrests
20 since the pandemic. As regarding
21 juvenile homicides, I'll give you
22 three years, 2012, 2017 and 2022. In
23 the year 2012, there were 14 arrests
24 of juveniles for homicide. In 2017,
25 there were 9. And in 2022, there

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1 were 37. So the percentage of
2 juvenile arrests has gone up from 5
3 to 6 percent to 13 percent last year.
4 So this is an area of considerable
5 concern.

6 I want to point out since the
7 DA's Office deals with prosecution
8 and enforcement what happens with the
9 gun-involved arrests. Gun-involved
10 arrest youth are held at the
11 Detention Center. We have a rate of
12 97 percent of the youth who have gun
13 arrests are held. Of those who are
14 not, there were 11 gun-involved youth
15 who were released. 7 were released
16 because they had BB guns and 3 were
17 accused of offenses where no firearm
18 was recovered. So overall the
19 practice in Philadelphia's juvenile
20 justice system is that children
21 charged with gun-related offenses are
22 held and detained at the PJJSC.

23 In addition, many folks have
24 asked us about divergent practices.
25 I want the record to reflect that the

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1 Philadelphia District Attorney's
2 Office diverts a number of youth, but
3 there have been 0, I repeat, 0 youth
4 diverted who have been charged with
5 gun-involved matters. Our diversion
6 programs, historically only 12 to 14
7 percent of Philadelphia youth were
8 arrested and charged were diverted
9 prepetition from the juvenile justice
10 system. Going back to 2016, that was
11 a rough amount, 12 to 14 percent.

12 In 2021, 21 percent of all
13 Philadelphia youth who were arrested
14 and charged were diverted prepetition
15 from the juvenile justice system.
16 This recidivism rate for juveniles
17 who are arrested, the recidivism rate
18 that we've tracked is that in 2016
19 there was a 34 percent recidivism
20 rate. In 2019, there was a 27
21 percent recidivism rate.

22 Recidivism came up earlier.
23 We have hired Econsult Solutions,
24 Inc., which is an economics firm to
25 do research on the juvenile justice

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1 system using data that was collected
2 using our case management system.
3 According to a report that's going to
4 come out towards the end of May, the
5 rate of recidivism in Philadelphia's
6 juvenile justice system was 57
7 percent of youth arrested formally
8 and charged in 2016. So we were able
9 to track them from 2016 up to 2021,
10 so we have a good tracking of them.

11 When you're looking at youth
12 with two or more arrests, the
13 re-arrest rate jumps to 81 percent.
14 So 57 percent for first arrest. Two
15 or more arrests jumps to 81 percent.
16 And again, we'll be releasing that
17 report towards the end of May. When
18 you ask the question who are the
19 youth who are in our juvenile justice
20 system, it's important to note that
21 81 percent of the youth who are in
22 our juvenile justice system are
23 African American. About 14 percent
24 are Latinx. The remainder are other
25 coming under the broad category. So

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1 most of these kids are African
2 American kids who are in our system.
3 The same kind of numbers you'll find
4 for kids who are held at the
5 Detention Center here at the PJJSC.

6 In terms of cost, and it's
7 important to recognize what the costs
8 are, our economic study which again
9 will be out towards the end of May,
10 will show that if a child is held at
11 the PJJSC, the cost is about \$220,000
12 for a year's stay there, and we do
13 have some youth who've been held
14 there for a year or state-run youth
15 development center costs are \$192,720
16 for kids who are held there.

17 Secure residential services
18 outside of the YDCs are about 125,000
19 and so on. The average cost I think
20 our study will say for our youth
21 going through the system is about
22 \$50,000.

23 We were asked to make
24 recommendations for specific
25 recommendations that can help reduce

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1 gun violence in the City. One of the
2 most important recommendations I can
3 make has actually been made by
4 several folks, that is, get youth at
5 the table, have them involved in
6 decision-making, have them involved
7 in implementing decisions, have them
8 involved in the follow-up and
9 assessments of the outcomes from what
10 is going on with youth. I think this
11 is important. We can look at youth
12 who are in our public schools. We
13 could actually have hearings at the
14 PJJSC since we have large numbers of
15 children there or we can have
16 hearings with children who are in
17 residential placement. We could have
18 them brought back for hearings or we
19 can actually go to the facilities
20 where they're being held.

21 Just in terms of cost, my
22 understanding is we've had children
23 at the PJJSC -- not my understanding,
24 but facts, we've had 60 to 70 kids
25 who've been waiting placement.

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1 Sometimes they are waiting placement
2 for as long as six months. The
3 average cost as I understand it based
4 upon our studies is that it cost
5 about \$700 a day per child who's
6 being held at the PJJSC. This comes
7 to roughly about \$1,400,000 depending
8 upon whether it's 60 or 70 days. But
9 over \$1 million in any case. And
10 it's my understanding that we are not
11 reimbursed for those costs.

12 Recommendation number -- first
13 of all, No. 2 would be we need more
14 facilities for out-of-home placement
15 of children. They should not be
16 waiting at the PJJSC for 60 days or
17 90 days or 120 days or even longer to
18 go to placement. Those children need
19 to be able to get placements. The
20 placements that we have I do not
21 believe are adequate. They do not
22 provide the kinds of educational and
23 vocational opportunities for young
24 people that they desperately need.

25 We need to make sure that

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1 those programs are available for our
2 young people. The best kinds of
3 programs will be those close to home
4 right here in Philadelphia so that
5 the cost of those facilities,
6 \$192,000, can be -- those costs, we
7 can have local people from
8 Philadelphia who are being paid to
9 look after our children. We need to
10 make sure that if we have these
11 programs and they're close to home,
12 that we have adequate programming for
13 girls.

14 Our programming for girls is
15 woefully inadequate. Girls typically
16 go from being at the Detention Center
17 straight to secure confinement at the
18 state level without there being any
19 intermediate programs. We need to do
20 a lot more involved there. We have
21 as was pointed out by others the age
22 of young people coming to our system
23 for violent offenses, including
24 homicides, has begun to decline
25 significantly.

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1 We have had in the last six
2 months at least five children who
3 have been 15 years old or younger, at
4 least one 13-year-old involved in
5 homicides or target homicides. As we
6 as prosecutors look at the issue, if
7 a child is charged with homicide and
8 convicted, then what are we going to
9 do with them? Are we going to send a
10 13-, 14- or 15-year-old to state
11 prison or are we going to send them
12 to a juvenile facility? If we send
13 them to a juvenile facility, how long
14 will they be at a juvenile facility,
15 one year, two years, three years,
16 four years, five years? The court
17 has jurisdiction until they're 21.
18 We would be remiss in our duties as
19 prosecutors if we sent them for one
20 or two years, especially since we
21 deal with victims who are looking for
22 much longer periods of time, but to
23 send them and not have appropriate
24 treatment is not the best thing to
25 do.

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1 So we're asking City Council
2 to help us with the State to find
3 appropriate secure facilities for
4 children charged with very serious
5 offenses who are very young. We note
6 that many times we look at dual
7 jurisdiction resolutions where
8 children are held until they're 20.5
9 years old. They'll get out. They
10 have six years of aftercare probation
11 under the supervision of our Juvenile
12 Probation Department. Then we have
13 them often on probation for a period
14 of time in the adult system, making
15 sure that if there are any
16 violations, that they are held
17 appropriately accountable.

18 Given that, we'd like to ask
19 City Council to work with us to help
20 the State develop appropriate
21 programming in the state prison
22 system for young offenders. We have
23 a number of young people who are
24 going to be 18 years old or 19 years
25 old who are going to go into the

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1 state system. We're asking that we
2 help find a way for the State to
3 approach to treat them appropriately.
4 They need educational opportunities
5 and job opportunities in the state
6 prisons. They need to be
7 rehabilitated, not just punished.
8 And we're looking for assistance in
9 negotiations with the State to try
10 and do that.

11 The United States Supreme
12 Court has recognized the importance
13 of adolescent development and
14 treating our kids, because adolescent
15 development is the cornerstone of the
16 laws that have been implemented by
17 the Supreme Court over the last
18 decade. We think that we should be
19 helping the state prisons and our
20 state facilities adapt themselves to
21 treating children like children, not
22 like young adults -- not like adults.

23 In addition, I want to point
24 out that the District Attorney's
25 Office has helped with prevention.

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1 During the last year, the DA's Office
2 has given out over 40 grants,
3 totaling over \$1 million. Monies
4 have come from forfeiture funds and
5 we have tried to find programs that
6 do not have a large following but are
7 doing good things with young people
8 and we think we've been successful
9 with that.

10 In addition, I had the good
11 fortune of working as Co-chair of the
12 Attorney General's National Task
13 Force on Children's Exposure to
14 Violence. At that time, we produced
15 a report, and a local person,
16 Dr. Theodore Corbin, who's Medical
17 Director of Healing Hurt People and
18 Co-director of the Center for
19 Nonviolence and Social Justice
20 testified before our committee.

21 There was a recommendation
22 coming out of there that we should
23 develop and provide trauma-informed
24 care at all hospital-based trauma
25 centers and emergency departments for

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1 all children exposed to violence.
2 According to Dr. Corbin without
3 intervention, hospitals discharge
4 violently injured patients to the
5 same violent environments where they
6 were injured without a prescription
7 for staying safe and with community
8 pressures to seek revenge. Too often
9 this results in a revolving door of
10 violence causing even more injuries,
11 arrests, incarcerations and sadly
12 deaths.

13 When Dr. Corbin testified, he
14 talked about young people who were
15 appearing before him, who was shot
16 once and coming back again being shot
17 a second time. So I would like to
18 encourage the Committee to pursue the
19 possibilities of having the trauma-
20 informed care at all hospitals and
21 trauma centers so that children can
22 receive the proper treatment before
23 they return to their communities.

24 We're talking about as was
25 pointed out by the Acting

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1 Commissioner for Police that there
2 are literally thousands of children
3 who are being shot every year. We
4 need to do what we can for them in
5 addition to what we're doing at the
6 DA's Office with victims who are
7 involved with the CARES program or
8 victims where someone is arrested, we
9 intervene actively there, but we
10 don't get a chance to intervene in
11 all shooting cases. So that is what
12 I have to say at this time. Thank
13 you for the opportunity to testify
14 before your Committee.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
16 very much.

17 The next panelist, please
18 state your name for the record,
19 Mr. Jimenez, and begin your
20 testimony.

21 MR. JIMENEZ: Good afternoon,
22 Chairman Johnson and Councilmember
23 Gauthier and Councilmembers of the
24 Committee on Gun Violence. My name
25 is Faustino Castro-Jimenez, and I am

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1 the Chief of Probation for the
2 Juvenile Unit for Probation and
3 Family Court. With me are our Deputy
4 Directors Amy Warner, Charlotte
5 Flynn, Gina Kozłowski and Supervisor
6 Kevin Gordon. Well, thank you for
7 the opportunity to testify today on
8 this very important issue.

9 The Probation Department has
10 jurisdiction for youth under the age
11 of 18 who have been arrested, and
12 their matters have been petitioned to
13 juvenile court via a new referral or
14 through the decertification process
15 for direct file juveniles, which are
16 initially heard in criminal court.
17 Placed on supervision we have
18 jurisdiction up to the age of 21.
19 Consistent with our statutory mandate
20 with respect to a balance and
21 restorative justice approach,
22 probation not only focuses on
23 rehabilitating the youth, but the
24 mandate also compels us to dedicate
25 balance attention to victim

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1 restoration, community protection and
2 youth accountability with competency
3 development.

4 We try to be intentional with
5 the scope of services offered to
6 youth by first employing a risk
7 assessment instrument that identifies
8 criminogenic needs in nine major
9 domains, ranging from education and
10 employment to prior and current
11 offenses to substance abuse to peer
12 relations. Once the case plans
13 develop, we incorporate a graduate
14 response approach and maximize the
15 use of incentives and interventions
16 that are incremental and
17 proportionate.

18 We are incentivizing youth
19 with tangible and non-tangible
20 incentives to complete supervision
21 goals. Examples of tangible
22 incentives include gift cards, phone
23 chargers, cell phone cases, ear buds
24 and book bags just to name a few.
25 From the onset of a new referral, we

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1 also work with our DBH partners to
2 evaluate behavioral, psychological or
3 traumatic events that youth may have
4 had or is experiencing. When
5 appropriate, this is done through a
6 court order evaluation where
7 recommendations occur for evidence-
8 based programming such as family
9 functional therapy or FFT.

10 With respect to community
11 opportunities for our youth and
12 recognizing that one in three
13 families in Philadelphia work in
14 poverty, we are thankful that City
15 Council has worked to allocate 22
16 million in grants to grassroots
17 organizations to work with our young
18 people and offer families in need
19 additional services that are
20 available throughout the City.

21 Other community-based services
22 we use are four evening reporting
23 centers that are funded through DHS,
24 which continue to work with our high-
25 risk population. These evening

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1 reporting centers located in the 14th
2 and the 26th Police Districts offer
3 services to youth under our
4 supervision Monday through Saturday
5 between the hours of 4:00 and 9:00,
6 which are the critical times that
7 youth are out there and may be shot
8 or may be unfortunately killed, which
9 we're trying to prevent.

10 Youth who are court-ordered to
11 attend these programs are offered
12 life skills, violence prevention,
13 group activities and are provided
14 nutritious meals while there. This
15 program has been effective and has
16 produced promising results thus far.
17 Regarding intervention, juveniles are
18 court-ordered supervision who are at
19 risk of being shot or may be
20 perpetrators of gun violence are
21 monitored by two of our specialized
22 units, namely our Juvenile
23 Enforcement Team and our Violence
24 Prevention Team.

25 For youth who have gun-related

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1 charges, we have increased community
2 and home visits from once a month to
3 four times a month. We are using GPS
4 monitoring as an alternative to
5 secure detention. GPS is not only
6 used as a safety enhancement to
7 supervision but also to place
8 movement restrictions on youth to
9 keep them away from neighborhoods
10 where they may likely be shot or
11 killed while at a rival group's
12 neighborhood.

13 We currently monitor between
14 280 and 300 youth on GPS. We are
15 involved in the Group Intervention
16 Project or GVI where we have
17 identified 15 at-risk youth. Our
18 family court judges are constantly
19 reviewing cases. And based on safety
20 of the youth, the charges and other
21 safety factors that the family might
22 bring into us, they are determining
23 if a youth's needs are best met at a
24 residential care facility or in a
25 community-based setting.

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1 And additionally as to
2 engagement, we have connected youth
3 to positive physical activities
4 through sports for juvenile justice,
5 which is a network of four providers
6 that include or introduces young
7 people to non-traditional sports such
8 as golf, tennis, martial arts and
9 softball. 70 of our youth
10 participated in these programs last
11 year.

12 We have just started our
13 summer work campaign to enroll as
14 many youth as possible to summer
15 employment opportunities offered
16 through PYN. We need however job
17 opportunities that are career-
18 oriented for our older population who
19 have graduated high school. With our
20 new Probation Community Relations
21 Unit along with our system partners,
22 we have been involved in multiple
23 community events to offer resources
24 and engage youth and community
25 members. In fact, we just had one

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1 last week, I believe April 6th, at
2 the Stenton Park and Rec Center.
3 There were about 40 partners that
4 were there. They were offering
5 resources and they were doing food
6 giveaways which was a great event for
7 our community.

8 Although community-based
9 agencies and outreach events
10 certainly are a great resource to
11 reduce violence, the number of guns
12 flooding our street is still
13 overwhelmingly high. And what is
14 most troublesome is that our youth
15 can access these weapons relatively
16 easy.

17 89 youth have been arrested
18 and charged on gun-related charges
19 since the beginning of this year.
20 Moreover, the use of social media by
21 our youth has certainly not helped to
22 decrease gun violence and gun-related
23 incidents. Negative peer influences
24 have not helped. Our older
25 individuals who use our young people

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1 to commit other crimes has certainly
2 not helped. And during the pandemic,
3 closure of many agencies across the
4 City that provided an outlet for our
5 young people also did not help.

6 Despite significant reductions
7 in the number of youth being
8 supervised on the probation
9 supervision, we recognize that we can
10 do better and there is still a lot of
11 work to be done with our young people
12 entering the system, including a more
13 symbiotic relationship with the
14 School District.

15 The Pennsylvania Juvenile
16 Court Judges Commission tracks and
17 evaluates County recidivism rates two
18 years after a case has been closed.
19 It's on the website. In the last
20 report, the Commission indicated that
21 Philadelphia's rates in 2016, '17,
22 '18 and 2019 dropped from 20 percent
23 to 16 percent to 13 percent to 12
24 percent respectively.

25 To place in perspective, the

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1 precipitous drop in population
2 entering our juvenile justice system,
3 4,057 petitions filed in 2012 and as
4 of last year 1,730. But we need to
5 stay focused on prevention. We have
6 open lines of communication with the
7 School District and are working with
8 school principals and the safety
9 office by sharing information
10 regarding adjudicated youth on our
11 supervision.

12 Many of these conversations
13 I've had with Chief Kevin Bethel.
14 And I know that, for instance, one of
15 the things that we're doing is we're
16 having our officers involved in some
17 of the meetings that are occurring
18 with the School District and that the
19 school principals are having with
20 regard to kids that are actually
21 creating challenges within the school
22 and how is it that we can intervene,
23 but we can only intervene with kids
24 that have been adjudicated delinquent
25 and are placed on supervision because

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1 that is our jurisdiction.

2 We can certainly provide
3 services, for instance, preventive
4 work that the court offers and other
5 services that the court offers as
6 well, but we can only intervene --
7 for instance, we get calls all the
8 time from principals saying, hey, we
9 have a kid, Donnie, he's creating
10 havoc, he's fighting a lot, he's
11 assaulting kids, what can you do. If
12 a kid is not, for instance, on GPS or
13 if a youth is not on supervision or
14 if a youth is not consent to decree
15 or adjudication or on probation or
16 any of the other programs that there
17 are court-ordered programs,
18 unfortunately we cannot intervene.
19 However, we do understand and
20 recognize that many of the population
21 that the School District serves is
22 the same population that will come to
23 us.

24 So what is it that we can do?
25 That is why I prefaced my comments by

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1 saying we need a more symbiotic
2 relationship with the School
3 District. One of the things that we
4 are doing is that we are involved in
5 one of their initiatives. In fact,
6 it's the one that's called the Youth
7 Viol -- I think Chief Kevin Bethel
8 actually alluded to it, which is
9 being piloted at Bartram High School.
10 And hopefully, they spread this
11 initiative across the City of
12 Philadelphia to other schools.

13 And so, we're involved in
14 those conversations, how can we help.
15 Because any time an arrest comes
16 through my desk or a shooting comes
17 through my desk, the first thing I
18 think about is what else could I have
19 done better because I have to be held
20 accountable. I have a responsibility
21 to the kids and families of
22 Philadelphia who are actually on our
23 supervision and I can do something to
24 prevent them from getting shot or
25 killed.

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1 Many of the parents -- I get
2 calls from parents saying what can
3 you do, what can you do to prevent --
4 my kid is involved with these other
5 groups or other facets of
6 Philadelphia that are actually
7 pulling my kid in, into this type of
8 crime delinquency and criminality.
9 The first thing I do is take a look
10 at to see if the young person has a
11 record. If the young person does not
12 have a record, unfortunately there's
13 nothing I can do except refer the
14 young person to DHS or refer the
15 young person to DHS -- or excuse me,
16 the School District or any other
17 entity that might offer those type of
18 preventive services. And we have
19 some at the court.

20 If a young person does have a
21 record, you can believe that I will
22 do everything possible to keep that
23 young person safe. Because one thing
24 I keep telling people is that I have
25 to -- I'm in the business now of

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1 saving lives, saving lives because
2 the young person might -- a young
3 person might call us or a parent
4 might say, my kid is going to get
5 shot and killed, what can you do,
6 right. Sometimes the option is I
7 have to either hold the child in
8 custody based upon hearing that
9 testimony that happens in court and
10 that I provide -- my officers provide
11 that testimony to the judge saying
12 the parent is asking for us to do
13 something, intervene, what is it that
14 we can do. And then we offer
15 solutions. We offer interventions.
16 First, we offer the community-based
17 because the Juvenile Act requires us
18 to always look at the least
19 restrictive option. And then we look
20 at of course any secured detention.

21 So the last thing I want to
22 just mention is with respect to
23 enforcement. The Juvenile Probation
24 Department is providing information
25 to the FBI Carjacking Task Force and

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1 have offered our assistance to the
2 newly created Carjacking Unit that
3 the District Attorney has just
4 created so we're working hand-in-
5 hand.

6 We do warrant and probation
7 searches in conjunction with the
8 Police, the Sheriff's Department, the
9 AG's Office and our other law
10 enforcement partners which I thank
11 them for. The probation searches are
12 based upon reasonable suspicion that
13 the youth under our supervision, only
14 under the supervision, are in
15 possession of weapons or narcotics.

16 And let me just say that
17 during 2022 through probation
18 searches and based upon social media
19 and other sites that we investigate
20 and warrant operations, we were able
21 to retrieve 26 illegal firearms from
22 our young people. In addition,
23 \$20,000 dollars' worth of illegal
24 drugs were confiscated from our young
25 people as well.

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1 In the large scheme of things
2 if you think about the City of
3 Philadelphia and how much the Police
4 Department has confiscated, we need
5 to recognize and think, this is about
6 just young people under the age of 21
7 under supervision that we have gone
8 out and because we're on social media
9 or any other sources, sometimes we
10 get a parent saying, hey, listen,
11 Johnny may have a weapon in his room.
12 And guess what, we have to act on it.
13 Why? Because that weapon can lead to
14 a crime. All right. And so, we
15 continue to try to intervene as much
16 as possible, provide information to
17 our parents as much as possible.
18 Because one thing we also know, and I
19 have to recognize, that we cannot do
20 it without the parents.

21 The parents are our main
22 partner. And if they do not help us
23 with regards to kids that are placed
24 on the supervision to assure they
25 positively transition out of the

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1 court system, then we're not going to
2 be able to -- this is a community
3 effort with our community partners,
4 our school-based partners, our
5 parents and certainly City Council.
6 So we need your support with regard
7 to this issue as well.

8 So thank you for having this
9 critical and important conversation.
10 My staff and I are available for any
11 questions that you may have. So
12 thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
14 you. Keisha Hudson.

15 MS. HUDSON: Good afternoon,
16 Council. My name Keisha Hudson, and
17 I want to thank Council for the
18 Special Committee for Gun Violence
19 Prevention for convening this hearing
20 to Council Chair and to Councilwoman
21 Gauthier for inviting us to join this
22 very important conversation.

23 First, I think we need to
24 frame this serious and complex
25 problem. Involvement in gun violence

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1 is more than a product of individual
2 choices. This is not a problem we
3 can solve through incarceration or
4 prosecution. In fact, increased
5 reliance on these tactics will only
6 contribute to the conditions that
7 lead to increased violence.

8 In our experience, three
9 factors make communities here in
10 Philadelphia and throughout the
11 United States more vulnerable to
12 community violence. And these three
13 factors are, one, a long history of
14 racial and socioeconomic segregation
15 and disinvestment where residents
16 perceive real threats to their
17 personal safety and, three, but
18 cannot access resources or leverage
19 relationships to change the
20 conditions they experience.

21 There are additional factors
22 that contribute to individuals living
23 within these communities to becoming
24 even more likely to participate in or
25 be the victim of violence. They

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1 include a disruption of the family
2 unit, economic and housing
3 instability and school disengagement.
4 These circumstances impact children
5 most acutely and have a long-term
6 consequences for them as individuals
7 and members of the larger society.

8 They also are the cause and
9 consequence of entanglement in our
10 dependency, delinquency and criminal
11 legal systems. The best approach to
12 reducing gun violence among youth are
13 those that address and do not
14 criminalize the very real fear young
15 people experience when navigating the
16 conditions of their lives and their
17 neighborhoods.

18 I am very encouraged that YEAH
19 Philly was invited to participate
20 today and they provided what I think
21 is the most powerful and impactful
22 testimony. Again, they are carrying
23 guns because they are not safe and
24 they don't perceive themselves to be
25 safe. They have been the victims of

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1 crime and/or have close friends who
2 are the victims of crime.

3 The conditions that our youth
4 live in is the reason that they are
5 carrying weapons. So we have to
6 challenge the assumption that
7 increasing the number of arrests or
8 adjudications or convictions or
9 adding more youth, putting them on
10 GPS for illegal gun possession is
11 going to improve public safety. It
12 is not.

13 In Philadelphia, enforcement
14 of non-violent firearm laws is
15 directed almost exclusively at
16 communities of color, and in recent
17 years young men under the age of 25.
18 Yet despite the exponential increases
19 in arrests and prosecution for
20 unlawful possession of firearms, gun
21 violence persists at high levels.
22 This tracks with a recent Loyola
23 University study that found people
24 arrested for and convicted of
25 non-violent possessory firearms are

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1 not those contributing to community
2 violence.

3 Last year unlawful possession
4 of firearm was the lead charge in 21
5 percent of our delinquency cases.
6 For almost half of the 127 people
7 facing these charges, this allegation
8 represented their only arrest last
9 year. And of those, 37 of the 127
10 had no previous contacts with the
11 delinquency system at all. All but 3
12 of the 127 young people lived in
13 areas most impacted by gun violence.
14 Even with no prior delinquency
15 contact, children facing firearm
16 offenses face harsh consequences
17 which can have lifelong consequences
18 for youth and their families.

19 The Defender Association
20 recommends creating opportunities to
21 divert young people charged with
22 possessory firearm offenses away from
23 the juvenile justice system.
24 Programs that divert non-violent
25 possessory offenses away from

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1 traditional system solutions have
2 shown that we can safely address
3 non-violent possessory offenses.

4 We can do this without
5 subjecting our youth to detention.
6 Adjudication and out-of-home
7 placements that deepen system
8 entanglement and destabilize families
9 and communities. Outcomes in
10 Minneapolis and Brooklyn lead the
11 Giffords Law Center, recommend that
12 jurisdictions partner with community-
13 based efforts to divert some of the
14 individuals facing these types of
15 charges, and we believe these
16 programs are particularly well-suited
17 for youth.

18 We recommend investments in
19 programs that provide or connect
20 families to trauma treatment for
21 children residing in communities with
22 high rates of violence and those who
23 have witnessed or experienced
24 violence themselves. Our office has
25 started to take a closer look at our

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1 clients' needs so we can better
2 anticipate how their potential prior
3 exposure to violence or trauma may
4 impact our representation and signal
5 the greater need for social support.

6 We began by looking at prior
7 involvement with the dependency
8 system and then also mapped the
9 communities where our clients facing
10 delinquency charges reside. And what
11 we discovered in our data is that the
12 primary driver of our office's budget
13 request to invest in our social
14 services and child advocacy units.

15 And I'm going to read through
16 this very slowly. It's data, but we
17 have submitted our detailed written
18 testimony that has this data in
19 detail. 25 percent of the youth we
20 represented last year in delinquency
21 cases had a prior active case in
22 dependency court. 25 percent had a
23 prior active case in dependency court
24 in Philadelphia.

25 1 in 5 of our adult Black male

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1 clients who were arrested more than
2 once last year had a history of
3 involvement with our dependency
4 system as a child. Only 9 young
5 people who we represented in
6 delinquency cases last year lived in
7 a census tract where no reported
8 shootings took place, only 9.

9 More than three-quarters of
10 the 602 youth who face delinquency
11 charges last year resided in one of
12 the areas defined as most impacted or
13 impacted by gun violence, more than
14 three-quarters of the 602
15 Philadelphia youth. 44 percent of
16 our youthful arrestees lived in one
17 of the most impacted areas. 32
18 percent of our youthful arrestees
19 live in one of the impacted areas.
20 For our young clients who reside in
21 the neighborhoods most impacted by
22 gun violence, many reside within feet
23 of multiple shootings.

24 And when we took a closer look
25 at our youthful clients charged with

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1 possessory firearm offenses, we
2 noticed our clients in the Strawberry
3 Mansion neighborhood of the City, for
4 example, live an average of within
5 750 feet of 5 shootings per year.
6 One child lived within 750 feet of 13
7 shootings last year. In parts of
8 West Philadelphia, our clients on
9 average live 750 feet from 4
10 shootings last year with at least 1
11 child living within 750 feet of 10
12 shootings.

13 In short, our youth are
14 suffering. Their life experiences
15 are driving their entanglement with
16 our dependency and delinquency
17 systems. And until we begin to
18 address the community-level factors
19 and the trauma, grief, fear and
20 conditions that reflect the poverty
21 that some of those most vulnerable
22 citizens face, we can expect this
23 epidemic of violence to get worse
24 before it gets better.

25 Our representation of children

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1 involved in dependency and
2 delinquency systems and adults
3 involved in the criminal legal system
4 puts us in a unique position to
5 provide a continuum of care for those
6 with the highest need. With the
7 right investment, particularly in our
8 social services and in our Child
9 Advocacy Unit, we can serve as a
10 one-stop shop for clients and help to
11 stem the tide of violence.

12 Thank you again for inviting
13 the Defender Association to testify
14 and for considering the ideas we've
15 presented today. Again, we did
16 submit a long-form written testimony
17 that has the data, that has the maps
18 of the areas that we've discussed.
19 And I'm open for any questions that
20 Council may have.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
22 very much.

23 Ms. Bianca from what, the
24 First Judicial District?

25 MS. VAN HEYDOORN: Hi. I'm

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1 Bianca Van Heydoorn. I'm not from
2 the First Judicial District.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm
4 sorry.

5 MS. VAN HEYDOORN: It's okay.
6 I am the Executive --

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Go ahead.

8 MS. VAN HEYDOORN: No worries.
9 Good afternoon. And thank you for
10 the opportunity --

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Executive
12 Director of the Youth Sentencing &
13 Reentry Project, excuse me.

14 MS. VAN HEYDOORN: No worries,
15 correct. Good afternoon and thank
16 you for the opportunity to testify to
17 the Special Committee on Gun Violence
18 Prevention. As I said, my name is
19 Bianca Van Heydoorn, and I'm the
20 Executive Director of the Youth
21 Sentencing & Reentry Project.

22 YSRP uses direct service to
23 transform the experiences of children
24 prosecuted in the adult criminal
25 legal system, including supporting

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1 them throughout their case and as
2 they return home from incarceration.
3 We also use policy advocacy to help
4 co-create a world in which children
5 are treated as children when they
6 come in contact with the criminal
7 legal system.

8 We understand that as young
9 people, our client partners have
10 goals and aspirations. We understand
11 that they have brains that are still
12 developing and that they need adults
13 to guide their choices and keep them
14 safe. For context, the nature of our
15 work means that we partner with young
16 people who have been charged with
17 acts of significant harm and/or
18 violence. At YSRP we don't ignore
19 the harm that our client partners may
20 have caused.

21 We remind them with our words
22 and our actions that that harm exists
23 as one part of who they are, and we
24 demonstrate for them with our words
25 and our actions that we refuse to

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1 throw them away. We don't want to
2 see harm come to them any more than
3 we want to see them cause harm to
4 anyone else. We concentrate on what
5 young people need to heal, which is a
6 question that's all too rare for
7 young people in general, but
8 especially for Black and Brown youth.

9 I will not read my full
10 written testimony today. I've
11 submitted that to Council because my
12 points were made more eloquently and
13 succinctly by my colleagues at YEAH
14 Philly and by Keisha Hudson who just
15 preceded me. I encourage you to
16 replay Man-Man's testimony and his
17 answers to Council's questions.

18 We were asked to comment today
19 on the unmet need in terms of
20 programs and legislative solutions.
21 We want to clearly state that there
22 are too many children incarcerated in
23 Philadelphia and that that harms
24 rather than helps all of our safety.
25 Incarceration is not the only

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1 possible response when a child
2 violates the law, and we also want to
3 add that we don't think that children
4 should ever under any circumstances
5 be tried as if they are adults.

6 As for recommendations, I have
7 the following to share that
8 underscores some of what you've heard
9 already. Number one, ask young
10 people what they need and have the
11 resources and infrastructure to
12 provide it as quickly as we move to
13 arrest young people and remove them
14 from their communities.

15 Number two, pause and deeply
16 investigate any programs, policies or
17 practices that emphasize surveillance
18 and control over responding directly
19 to what young people need. An ankle
20 monitor is not a service nor is it
21 required to provide support to a
22 young person.

23 Number three, any program or
24 policies that are implemented and/or
25 funded should begin with the

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1 assumption that young people deserve
2 to live full lives with dignity,
3 including having their basic needs
4 met. Measures of success should
5 prioritize whether young people have
6 met their self-identified goals and
7 not simply be based on the low bar of
8 recidivism.

9 In fact, the National Academy
10 of Sciences recently released a
11 report that shows in great detail how
12 recidivism is the wrong measure for
13 safety, rehabilitation or desistance
14 from harmful activities. And four,
15 we should recognize and take
16 seriously what Man-Man and Keisha
17 Hudson before me lifted up that young
18 people are navigating safety as best
19 they can with the tools that they
20 have before them. As the adults, we
21 are responsible for creating the
22 conditions to mitigate the harm
23 that lives -- excuse me, to mitigate
24 the harm that looms large over them
25 as they navigate their daily lives.

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1 Finally, I want to implore
2 everyone who's listening and City
3 Council and anyone with any influence
4 to make a difference. At some point
5 today, I would ask you to pause and
6 think about someone who loves you.
7 Think about the person that
8 celebrates your successes. Think
9 about the person who showed up for
10 you to hold you accountable when you
11 were treating yourself or someone
12 else poorly. How did that person
13 show up? What ways did they
14 communicate with you? What
15 opportunities and access did they
16 give you that helped you shift in a
17 way towards growth? Because those
18 are the interventions that we need to
19 be lifting up, not the ones that seek
20 to continue to punish poverty, punish
21 decisions that are made by young
22 people whose brains are still
23 developing, right.

24 Those are the things that are
25 happening in our communities in

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1 programs like YEAH Philly and YSRP
2 and YASP and many other programs that
3 are happening in the City, and those
4 are the very interventions that are
5 happening in communities that are
6 whiter and wealthier than our client
7 partners have to navigate and they
8 deserve the access to those
9 opportunities so that they can make
10 different and better choices with the
11 information that they have around
12 them.

13 Let's remember that even those
14 who have been involved in acts of
15 significant harm want safety and
16 Security, and we heard that
17 emphatically from Man-Man today and I
18 know that there are thousands of
19 young people throughout this City who
20 want that safety as well. Thank you
21 for the opportunity to testify and I
22 look forward to answering any
23 questions.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
25 you.

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1 Any questions or comments from
2 members of the Committee?

3 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Mr.
4 Chair?

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I have
7 a couple of questions.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
9 Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I
11 don't have a lot of questions for
12 Keisha or Bianca because they were
13 just so thorough in their testimony
14 and in their recommendations. I do
15 want to thank you all, not only for
16 the work that you do on behalf of
17 young people on a daily basis, but
18 for your passionate advocacy and
19 lifting up the experiences of young
20 people to make policy and systems
21 changes.

22 I did have one question for
23 Bianca. I wanted to know since you
24 don't think that recidivism is the
25 right sort of measure, I wanted to

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1 hear you talk about what is the right
2 measure. And then I have a question
3 for Bob Listenbee if he's still on.
4 I do have to ask about his testimony
5 on recidivism because that is a
6 measure that we use heavily now. And
7 I think I heard him say that the
8 recidivism rates that he's seeing in
9 his work at DAO is 57 percent. So I
10 wanted Bob to talk about any insight
11 he has on how to bring that down
12 effectively through better
13 intervention.

14 MS. VAN HEYDOORN: Sure. I'm
15 happy to go first. It helps to talk
16 about why recidivism is a poor
17 measure before talking about what the
18 right measure is. What we've known
19 for a long time and that it helps to
20 have validated research to support is
21 when we're looking at recidivism,
22 number one, a lot of people define it
23 differently. So even when we're
24 looking at it as a measure, we're not
25 always talking about the same things.

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1 Some people talk about re-arrest as
2 recidivism, reconviction,
3 reincarceration, so we're not always
4 measuring apples-to-apples.

5 Secondly, even if you think
6 about those measures, that doesn't
7 tell you very much about the health
8 and safety and security of a person's
9 life. It tells you did the person go
10 back to jail, right. What we know
11 about communities that young people
12 come from is that they are
13 overpoliced, they are oversurveilled,
14 so it's more likely that a young
15 person is going to come in contact
16 with a police officer just walking
17 outside of their door. It says
18 nothing about whether they're
19 actually engaged in criminal
20 activity.

21 Number two, just capturing
22 whether someone is re-arrested
23 reconvicted or reincarcerated also
24 tells you very little about what
25 resources and support they have

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1 around them to help them navigate the
2 world in ways that don't involve
3 harm. What the National Institute of
4 Sciences says the measures should be
5 are the things that Keisha Hudson
6 just talked about, are the indices of
7 safety support. Does this person
8 have their basic needs met, do they
9 have their -- are they able to make
10 significant movement towards their
11 goals and aspirations because those
12 are the things that actually help
13 someone shift from -- shift into
14 desistance. If I am married, I am
15 less likely to. There are a whole
16 host of indicators of success. When
17 we are looking at a young person that
18 has yet to be involved in the
19 criminal legal system, we are not
20 capturing -- we're not celebrating
21 the fact that they didn't go. We're
22 celebrating the fact that they have
23 close ties to their family, that
24 they're engaged in school, that they
25 have a safe place to live, right.

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1 And what we've learned at YSRP
2 is that that's the way we just do
3 things. We ask young people what are
4 your goals, and we are holding them
5 accountable to making meaningful
6 steps towards those goals and
7 offering the support and resources
8 they need to be able to achieve them.
9 And when we are focused on doing
10 something -- when I'm focused on the
11 next thing that I need to do for work
12 or the steps I need to take to buy a
13 house, I'm less focused -- and this
14 is going to be a very simple example
15 so I don't mean to trivialize what
16 we're talking about here -- but when
17 I'm focused on those things, I'm less
18 focused on scrolling through YouTube
19 for meaningless videos, right.

20 If I am focused on the things
21 that are going to move my life
22 forward, I am less focused on the
23 things that are going to hold me
24 back. So if we are talking to young
25 people about what they need and what

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1 resources we need to wrap around them
2 to make it more likely that they will
3 engage in the things that will help
4 them desist from crime, recidivism
5 takes care of itself.

6 We are putting the emphasis on
7 the wrong syllable here, right, if
8 we're looking at just how do we keep
9 kids out. It's more control and less
10 actually responding from a youth
11 development perspective.

12 MS. HUDSON: And I just want
13 to chime in really quickly. I'm not
14 telling anyone in Council what they
15 don't already know that, that there
16 is so much power in the attorney-
17 client confidentiality, right. Our
18 clients know that they can talk to us
19 about anything, including things they
20 will not tell their mother or their
21 father or their pastor. They're
22 going to talk to our advocates and we
23 can have our clients sometimes for a
24 year or two, our adult clients
25 sometimes for three years as their

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1 case winds its way through the
2 criminal justice system. And the
3 reason I use the words continuum of
4 care is that we need to be brought
5 into these conversations as we are
6 today, but also what are our
7 recommendations and what are our
8 solutions.

9 And just an additional point
10 on dependency, Philadelphia leads the
11 nation in the number of Black and
12 Brown kids who are removed from their
13 families and placed in the dependency
14 or the foster care system. That is a
15 statistic that is disturbing. It's
16 alarming. And as I said before when
17 I said the top three, that disruption
18 of the family unit is a driver. And
19 we have to go all the way back to
20 look at what are we doing to
21 families, how are we best serving our
22 youth and keeping them with their
23 families and given the family's
24 support at the earliest possible
25 point.

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1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:

2 Mr. Listenbee.

3 MR. LISTENBEE: Yes.

4 Councilmember Gauthier asked me about
5 the recidivism number. It is not a
6 number that we came up with at the
7 DA's Office. We did with funding
8 from a foundation hire Econsult
9 Solutions, Inc., and that is the
10 number they came up with based upon
11 research. We helped provide data
12 from the District Attorney's Office,
13 and they went back again from the
14 years 2016 to 6/30/22. The
15 recidivism rate was 57 percent of
16 youth arrested. And then where there
17 were two or more arrests, the
18 re-arrest rate jumped to 81 percent.

19 I do not believe that
20 recidivism should be the primary
21 criteria used either. However,
22 because we are prosecutors in this
23 criminal justice system, it is one of
24 the indicia used to measure whether
25 or not the system is successful.

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1 Overall if you have a 57 or 81
2 percent recidivism rate, you are not
3 being successful at rehabilitating
4 young people, you're not.

5 I am a parent of five
6 children. The thing I look at for my
7 kids is whether or not they have
8 jobs, good education, are they
9 getting married, what kinds of things
10 are they doing that are socially
11 acceptable and socially desirable.
12 So I think this is an opportune
13 moment for City Council and other
14 interested parties to define what
15 Philadelphia's criteria for outcomes
16 and success should be. City Council
17 can dictate that to the criminal
18 justice system. As a prosecutor, I
19 cannot. I can only measure what is
20 happening or ask private consultants
21 to measure what is and try and push
22 forward ideas that make good sense.

23 My first recommendation to
24 City Council was that you should have
25 youth at the table, they should be

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1 involved in decision-making, they
2 should be involved in the
3 implementation of decisions, they
4 should be involved in follow-up and
5 in the assessment of outcomes because
6 I think youth have a pretty good idea
7 of the kinds of things they want to
8 look at. That is what I believe.

9 So I'm really not far away
10 from others who think that this is
11 not the best way to go about it. But
12 also as a prosecutor, I'm telling
13 City Council what we have and what's
14 going on in the system. And when I
15 look at these numbers and know that
16 81 percent of the youth are Africa
17 American, 14 percent are Latinx and
18 the remaining 6 percent are other, I
19 know that -- and I look at the
20 poverty rates. I can tell you
21 exactly where these kids were
22 arrested. They are in the poverty
23 areas of the City. So we need to do
24 something about it. But that's
25 something that City Council has to

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1 decide it wants to do.

2 As a prosecutor, I need to
3 make sure that you have adequate
4 information based upon data that
5 we've been able to collect from our
6 new case management system and data
7 that's being collected by others
8 throughout the City. So that is my
9 answer for Councilmember Gauthier.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
11 you so much to all of you.

12 Thanks, Mr. Chair.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
14 very much.

15 Any other questions from
16 members of the Committee?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
19 Mr. Listenbee, can I get a copy of
20 that Econsult -- that Econ report?

21 MR. LISTENBEE: Yes, sir.
22 It's in draft form now, but we can
23 provide it to you in draft form. It
24 will be finished and released at the
25 end of May, but we can give you

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1 whatever you request.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Awesome.

3 Awesome. Well, I thank all of you
4 for your participation in this
5 hearing called by Councilwoman Jamie
6 Gauthier. This is an issue that's
7 very near and dear to my heart.

8 Bianca, you've got me thinking
9 about how I have become the first
10 African American Councilperson
11 representing the 2nd Councilmanic
12 District, former State Representative
13 of the 186th Legislative District,
14 graduate from the University of
15 Pennsylvania Fels of Government where
16 I got my Master's Degree in
17 Government Administration, Public
18 Finance, undergraduate degree from
19 Mansfield University in Criminal
20 Justice with a dual minor in
21 Philosophy and Sociology. However, I
22 got my first gun charge at the age of
23 16, right.

24 And it was a judge by the name
25 of Abram Frank Reynolds when I came

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1 to court with my parents who told me,
2 he got this saying, look on that
3 ledge and, you know, thinking about
4 sending me away, but because I was
5 able to show that in school I had
6 pretty good intentions because my
7 parents made sure that I did go to
8 school. My behavior might have been
9 3s, right, but if you put me on
10 probation and then that probation
11 officer stayed on top of me -- you
12 hear that, Castro-Jimenez -- and
13 would pop up on --

14 MR. JIMENEZ: I hear you.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- the
16 corner of 18th and Dickinson when I
17 would hang outside with my friends,
18 right. And then I met a guy by the
19 name of Hardy Williams, who was a
20 former State Senator, former State
21 Representative while I was at the
22 University of Pennsylvania, and I
23 still had one foot in the street and
24 one foot at Penn, and asked me what I
25 want to do with my life. I had

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1 another guy who was a State
2 Representative who had me
3 participating at the Christian Street
4 YMCA on their Board as a young man.
5 And so, for me it was mentorship,
6 right.

7 It was people wrapping their
8 arms around me and believing in me
9 and really helped me kind of navigate
10 through -- and this is the early
11 '90s, so the homicide rate we all
12 know is already 500 in the early
13 '90s, no different than what we're
14 seeing right now.

15 But part of this, at least for
16 me, as a young man that kind of
17 actually navigated through this
18 process was having other people kind
19 of wrap their arms around me and kind
20 of invest in me early on, right, and
21 hopefully through this conversation
22 that we're having -- and I thank you
23 also, Bianca, for pushing this
24 conversation to another level
25 regarding what is recidivism, right.

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1 Because a lot of times, yes, we look
2 at it from a bureaucratic standpoint.
3 As long as they don't come back into
4 the system, that means you must be
5 doing a good job, right. But you
6 don't know the other half to that
7 story why that person isn't coming
8 inside the system. They could not be
9 inside the system but still facing
10 various challenges of life.

11 And so, I thank all of you for
12 your hard work and your dedication.
13 And, Keisha, thank you for stepping
14 up always to the plate and making
15 sure that juveniles is an intricate
16 part of the work that the Public
17 Defender's Office is doing.

18 And also, even as a young man
19 fresh out of college, Mr. Listenbee,
20 I was a part of the Youth Aid Panel
21 and was able to use my experience
22 growing up and what I've learned that
23 helped me change my life with other
24 young men who I still have
25 interaction with today through that

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1 particular initiative to help them
2 stay on the right path, really giving
3 them a second chance.

4 And so, I thank all the work
5 that all of you are doing. Keep up
6 the good work. Obviously, this won't
7 be the last time you'll hear from
8 this Committee as we wrap our arms
9 around and addressing what I believe
10 is the number one issue here in the
11 City of Philadelphia, and that's gun
12 violence in particularly amongst our
13 young people. So thank you very
14 much.

15 Any other questions or
16 comments from members of the
17 Committee?

18 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

19 Mr. Chair --

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Go ahead,
21 Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I just
23 wanted to thank everybody that
24 testified. For me, this was
25 extremely valuable in uncovering the

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1 things that we need to work on and
2 things that we need to improve as a
3 City and no one of those solutions
4 was more important than having young
5 people actually involved in the
6 policy-making and in the decision-
7 making to ensure that what we're
8 doing actually works for them. So
9 thanks so much everyone for your hard
10 work every day and for participating
11 today.

12 And thank you, Mr. Chair, for
13 running the hearing and for what you
14 do every day.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
16 you, Councilwoman Jamie Gauthier, for
17 keeping your finger on the pulse and
18 making sure that our young people are
19 safe, but most importantly that we're
20 not just taking a solely traditional
21 law enforcement approach, the
22 punitive approach, but beginning
23 investing in our young people.

24 And I always have to remind
25 people and, Jamie, you say this as

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1 well on a regular that this has been
2 a result of years and years of
3 disinvestment and a lack of
4 investment on the front end in terms
5 of how we support our young people.
6 And over the last few years, I've
7 seen the paradigm shift here in the
8 City of Philadelphia as it relates to
9 at least the members of this body of
10 Council of how we begin to invest in
11 the areas of prevention, how we begin
12 to invest in the areas of
13 intervention that most importantly
14 begin to challenge the status quo on
15 how we step up to the plate and
16 support our young people. This is
17 the hard work. It's easy to just say
18 let's just lock them up, because that
19 young person you lock up and you sent
20 away to juvie hall, they come back,
21 5, 10 years. I know.

22 I mean, again I'm an elected
23 official but I'm very, very still
24 close to my neighborhood. I'm an
25 elected official in the neighborhood

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1 in which I grew up. I'm an elected
2 official in the neighborhood in which
3 I changed my life, so I still have
4 relationships with individuals with
5 some that's doing great, some that
6 are in challenging situations. But
7 this is hard work because there are
8 no throwaway children at the end of
9 the day, at least as how I view
10 things because no one looked at me
11 and said, you know what, we don't
12 want to support this young man, let
13 him go ahead and stand on the corner
14 and continue to do the things that
15 he's doing. And that's coming from a
16 household with a support system, some
17 challenges as well, but for the most
18 part morals and values were there.

19 But sometimes we do what we
20 want to do because that
21 environment -- I always tell parents
22 this, particularly moms as well,
23 right, that we got to hold on to
24 their boys because the streets will
25 take a young man and will not return

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1 them, and that's why it takes our
2 work so difficult. It takes a lot of
3 hard work in terms of work that we're
4 doing. And so, I'm going to wrap up
5 on that. Thank you very much.

6 And now, we're going to call
7 up individuals for public comment.
8 Will the Clerk please call the first
9 individual for public comment please.

10 THE CLERK: First for public
11 comment we have Neisha B.

12 (No response.)

13 THE CLERK: Would Council
14 Support be able to connect --

15 MS. B: Hello?

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Are you
17 ready? Just state your name for the
18 record and you can begin.

19 MS. B: Hello? Sorry.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, you
21 can begin.

22 MS. B: I'm ready. Can you
23 hear me?

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Just
25 state your name and you can begin.

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1 MS. B: I'm Neisha B.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Go ahead.

3 Say your testimony, Neisha B.

4 MS. B: All right. So you
5 know with all the gun violence that's
6 been happening, I was thinking of
7 some resources that might can help as
8 far as a mentor program, like maybe
9 some boot camps can help, like some
10 military boot camps could help. Just
11 trying to think of some other things
12 that might could help these
13 teenagers.

14 Like, mostly everything is
15 mainly from parents being involved
16 with fighting with the students. I
17 think that if we can get through with
18 the parents first and then try to
19 work our way with the kids because it
20 mainly starts from lack of love and
21 affection and attention. That's
22 mainly all the things that I think
23 the reason why the gun violence is
24 involved.

25 Like, a lot of gun violence is

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1 happening because the kids are, like,
2 trying to fit in and they don't have
3 no kind of love or affection at home,
4 no attention. I really think that if
5 we can maybe do like back in Jersey
6 how they got a law about the no bully
7 zone. If you bully another child,
8 you'll get a fine. I think if we
9 could do a law with parents getting
10 fined if they get involved with
11 fighting other kids. There's a lot
12 of ideas that I have. The problem is
13 getting the help.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.
15 Well, thank you very much. We
16 appreciate you for taking time out of
17 your schedule, Neisha, for you to
18 give testimony. And thank you very
19 much.

20 MS. B: No problem.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: All
22 right. Have a good day.

23 MS. B: Same to you.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Will the
25 Clerk please call the next person for

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1 public testimony.

2 THE CLERK: There are no
3 other -- no other individuals for
4 public comment today, Mr. Chair.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: There
6 being no further questions from
7 members of this Committee and no
8 other witnesses to testify, I will
9 ask if there is anyone else to
10 present in this hearing whose name
11 has not been called or anyone who is
12 wishing to provide testimony?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Hearing
15 none, I want to thank all the panel
16 of witnesses for their participation
17 today. We value your opinions.

18 With that being said, this
19 concludes the Special Committee on
20 Gun Violence. I want to give also an
21 acknowledgment to Deputy Commissioner
22 Stanford and the Philadelphia Police
23 Department, Frank Vanore, Joel Dales,
24 for your also hard work and
25 dedication around this particular

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1 issue. Thank you very much and take
2 care.

3 (Special Committee on Gun
4 Violence Prevention concluded at
5 1:51 p.m.)

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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 CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of this
transcript does not apply to any reproduction
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