

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

Via Microsoft Teams
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, December 2, 2021
2:04 p.m.

PRESENT:

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

BILL 210923 - An ordinance amending Title 9 of
The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Regulation of
Businesses, Trades and Professions," by adding
a new Chapter 9-5700, entitled "Prohibition on
Certain Gambling Machines and Skills Games"...

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good
3 afternoon, everyone. This is a public
4 hearing of the Committee of Public Safety
5 regarding Bill No. 210923.

6 Before I begin this hearing,
7 I'd like to recognize Samantha Williams,
8 Esquire, who will read an important
9 announcement.

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

12 I understand that state law
13 currently requires that the following
14 announcement be made at the beginning of
15 every remote public hearing as follows:

16 Due to the current public
17 health emergency, City Council committees
18 are meeting remotely. We are using
19 Microsoft Teams to make these hearings
20 possible. Instructions for how the
21 public can view and offer testimony at
22 public hearings of Council committees are
23 included in the public hearing notices
24 that are published in the Daily News,
25 Inquirer, Legal Intelligencer prior to

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2 the hearings, and can also be found on
3 PHLCouncil.com.

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

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

22 Thank you.

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

25 And would you please take the

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2 roll so that we can establish a quorum,
3 and those members who are here will
4 acknowledge that you are present and say
5 a few words so that your image can be
6 captured.

7 THE CLERK: Councilmember
8 Thomas.

9 (No response.)

10 THE CLERK: Councilmember
11 Green.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: I think
13 you're on mute, sir.

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I was on
15 mute. I am here and present and did not
16 want to be scolded by the Chief Clerk to
17 this Committee.

18 THE CLERK: Good afternoon,
19 Councilman Green.

20 Councilmember Gauthier.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good
22 afternoon, Mr. Chair, colleagues,
23 Samantha, and to all of the witnesses for
24 today. Present.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good

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2 afternoon.

3 THE CLERK: Councilmember Gym.

4 (No response.)

5 THE CLERK: Councilmember

6 Brooks.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Good

8 afternoon, everyone. I am present.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good

10 afternoon.

11 THE CLERK: Vice Chairman

12 Johnson.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Present.

14 THE CLERK: And Chairman Jones.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: I am

16 present, and that establishes a quorum

17 for this Committee. We are officially in

18 order.

19 Ms. Williams, would you please

20 read the title of this bill for today.

21 THE CLERK: Bill No. 210923,

22 amending Title 9 of The Philadelphia

23 Code, entitled "Regulation of Businesses,

24 Trades and Professions," by adding a new

25 Chapter 9-5700, entitled "Prohibition on

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2 Certain Gambling Machines and Skills
3 Games," to prohibit the operation of any
4 casino-style or skill game that accepts
5 cash payment for the chance of a cash
6 reward and is not otherwise regulated by
7 the State of Pennsylvania, all under
8 certain terms and conditions.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
10 Ms. Williams.

11 Before we start this hearing, I
12 would like to offer a few insights.

13 Number one, I chair Public
14 Safety, but I'm also Co-Chair of Criminal
15 Justice Reform. I'm also a Pennsylvania
16 Human Relations Commissioner.

17 I want you to know that over
18 the Thanksgiving holiday, I had an
19 opportunity, a rare opportunity, to watch
20 a movie classic, and it was The
21 Godfather. And in one of the scenes,
22 there was a distressing dialogue, comment
23 exchanged between the Dons of all of the
24 different families, and in that
25 conversation, they were talking about

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2 drugs being introduced to their business
3 model, in particular heroin, and they
4 were struggling with whether or not they
5 would do it. But one part that was
6 relatively racist and discouraging was
7 one of the Dons said that if we do it, we
8 will relegate it and keep it away from
9 school kids, keep it out of children's
10 hands, and we will sell it only in the
11 colored people's neighborhood, because
12 they don't have souls anyway.

13 Every time I watch that movie,
14 I shudder to think how people thought
15 about us then, but I fast forward to now
16 when I had the opportunity to go up and
17 watch the City Solicitor's group argue
18 before the Commonwealth Court a piece of
19 legislation that we passed that deals
20 with reporting guns that are lost or
21 stolen. And one of the three judges said
22 a comment that was kind of eerily
23 similar. He said, well, Philadelphia has
24 a whole bunch of problems and maybe they
25 should spend more time addressing those

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2 local problems that they have
3 jurisdiction over versus coming up here
4 tampering with the Second Amendment.

5 It took me aback, but even in
6 people's negative comments, there's a
7 ring of truth often, and that ring of
8 truth is that we should take advantage of
9 the authorities that are given us within
10 the City Charter to govern ourselves to
11 safeguard ourselves.

12 When I look at what is going on
13 in our community by these GVTs, video
14 game terminals, it reminds me of the fact
15 that there is no governing entity at the
16 State and we do have an opportunity to
17 take our destiny in our own hands.

18 What I want to point out is
19 that what is a nuisance business?
20 Nuisance business isn't the bricks, the
21 Sheetrock, the electric, the lighting
22 that a building has. A nuisance business
23 is the activities that happen within that
24 structure. If you're selling liquor by
25 the drink, if you are selling loose

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2 cigarettes, if you are selling drug
3 paraphernalia and if you have a secret
4 word, a secret code, actual drugs, those
5 are the things that impact negatively the
6 quality of life in our neighborhoods.

7 I say to you that I remember a
8 time, and most of my colleagues here
9 aren't old enough when the numbers, the
10 street numbers, were the thing that our
11 grandparents and parents kind of relied
12 on, and I remember my grand-mom playing
13 her favorite numbers, and when it hit,
14 oh, Lord, it was a happy day. But City
15 government and the federal government
16 spent a great deal of time shutting that
17 down, and the way they did it was to
18 create a legal lottery, which superseded
19 that. You could apply that to the
20 after-hour speakeasies that they shut
21 down as well.

22 So when we look at the
23 proliferation of these gambling one-arm
24 bandits in poor neighborhoods throughout
25 the City, where is Eliot Ness and The

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2 Untouchables when you need them?

3 Let me take you back. In 2017,
4 the whole idea of video terminals was
5 discussed, debated, and legislated, and
6 what it said was -- the argument went
7 back and forth. The compromise was that
8 you can have these machines at trucking
9 terminals only. Let me repeat that.
10 Trucking terminals only.

11 Since then, there have been
12 approximately 50,000 of these machines
13 placed throughout Pennsylvania, some in
14 legitimate places that make sense. But
15 over 2,000 bandit machines ungoverned by
16 anybody, not the Commonwealth of
17 Pennsylvania or the City of Philadelphia,
18 have found their ways into corner stores
19 in some of our poorest neighborhoods. In
20 2017, this body voted 17 to 0 not to
21 include Philadelphia County as one of
22 those places that you could put these
23 machines in. 17 to 0.

24 But somehow the back door was
25 left open by the Commonwealth of

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2 Pennsylvania, because there is no
3 overriding legislation. It is left to us
4 to regulate.

5 So over 2,000 of these
6 machines, again, have found their way
7 into our stores and are not legitimate,
8 are not regulated, are not taxed by
9 anyone.

10 So left unto their own devices,
11 this would be relatively harmless, but it
12 isn't harmless. What happens is often
13 they are on top of other issues within
14 those corner stores that create the kind
15 of mayhem that we have to deal with,
16 where they sell loosie cigarettes, where
17 they sell liquor by the drink. And these
18 things aren't behind the Plexiglass where
19 the legal lotteries are. They're right
20 out in the open in the lobby for people
21 to utilize.

22 What has become one of the
23 methodologies of those people with
24 criminal intent is, they're watching,
25 watch those machines, do other things

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2 while they're in there, and see someone
3 hit. They'll say that that young man has
4 a red tie and is wearing a vest and is
5 about 6'3" and he hit for about \$250.
6 He's coming out the store now. What
7 happens next is an armed robbery.

8 We have to regulate these
9 things. We have the power to do so.

10 So the argument is often, well,
11 let our big brothers and sisters at the
12 State introduce the legislation. And
13 we've been waiting since 2017, over five
14 years. Nothing has happened. There's
15 been lawsuits.

16 The State Police view these
17 things as inappropriate and illegal.
18 When they tried to confiscate them, there
19 was a lawsuit filed by the owners saying
20 there is no legislation at the State or
21 City level governing us, so you are
22 inappropriate, you cannot overstep your
23 bounds. And so they did.

24 So they stopped it. And so we
25 are waiting for someone to rescue us, but

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2 I would suggest to you that we are who we
3 are waiting for.

4 So now some people might say
5 that this happened, you know, almost
6 organically. I would say it did not. I
7 would say that there are particular
8 neighborhoods that are targeted. I would
9 suggest to my colleagues that you're not
10 going to find these machines in zip code
11 19106, which is the richest zip code in
12 Philadelphia, which is Society Hill, but
13 you will find it in 19131 in West Philly.
14 You're not going to find these machines
15 in 19143 or you're not going to find them
16 in Chestnut Hill or other places of
17 wealth, but you will find them in North
18 Philly, West Philly, South Philly, and
19 beyond. This is not by chance. They
20 figure we don't care and we don't govern
21 our own abilities to do it. 19132, North
22 Philly, overwhelmed with these machines.

23 So with that, I want to say to
24 my colleagues that you should be mad.
25 You should be insulted that people did

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2 not stop by your office and say,
3 Councilwoman, what do you think? Where
4 should they go and, more importantly,
5 where shouldn't they go? How do we
6 avoid, Councilman, juveniles on their way
7 to school deciding with their backpacks
8 on to play at these machines? How do we
9 regulate the payouts? How do you know
10 that they don't remotely increase the
11 amount of money that has to go in the
12 machine before there ever, ever is a
13 payout? You don't know, because none of
14 us know.

15 So we should be insulted in
16 this Committee. We should be insulted
17 within our body, and every department
18 that was bypassed on the way to drop
19 these machines off should be angered as
20 well.

21 But I hope through this hearing
22 and through subsequent discussions,
23 because I'm going to meet with these
24 people, that we ask the tough questions
25 to get the proper answers to protect our

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2 people. We're going to see this through.
3 My name is Curt Jones, and you have my
4 word on it.

5 And with that, Ms. Williams,
6 would any of the other members of this
7 Committee like to say a few words?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Hearing
10 none, going once, hearing none, going
11 twice, Samantha, would you please read
12 the names of the first panel to testify.

13 THE CLERK: Yes. The first
14 panel will be Pete Wilson, Kirsten Britt,
15 and Reverend Donna Jones.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are you off
17 mute, Pete?

18 MR. WILSON: Yes, I am. I just
19 took myself off mute, and I just want to
20 say thank you for having me, Chairman
21 Jones.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Can you say
23 your name for the record.

24 MR. WILSON: P-E-T-E-R,
25 W-I-L-S-O-N.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

3 MR. WILSON: Peter Wilson.

4 Special shout-out to my
5 Councilwoman, Jamie Gauthier, and all of
6 Council.

7 You all know me. I think you
8 all know that my ward encompasses 48th
9 Street to 40th Street, Market Street to
10 Parkside Avenue. I've represented that
11 ward close to two decades, and since I've
12 been in that position, all I've tried to
13 do is make things better for the
14 community that I represent.

15 I'm not going to go into all
16 the things that I've accomplished, but I
17 think that the seriousness of this
18 discussion is really -- it's not up there
19 with gun violence, because people aren't
20 dying from gambling, but they're hurting
21 their homes, they're hurting -- I mean,
22 listen, we all know that the Sixth Ward
23 is one of the poorest, poorest wards in
24 the City, and as Councilman Jones
25 mentions in his introduction about The

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2 Godfather and the "powers to be" using
3 the Black community to drop all these
4 negative things, we got all these
5 stop-and-go's, okay, we got drugs coming
6 in and out of the community. You guys
7 know the history of Los Angeles when they
8 dropped all the crack cocaine and then it
9 spread out throughout the country.

10 So I was on the Avenue, 41st
11 and Lancaster, about three weeks ago, and
12 one of the brothers asked me, Pete, did
13 you notice the gambling rooms that are
14 not inside but outside and they're
15 accessible 24/7?

16 So my thought immediately was,
17 I got people that can't even pay their
18 rent, that can't buy food, that can't
19 send their kids to day care, and they got
20 access to machines? That's only a dream,
21 just like the Councilman was talking
22 about his grandmother, his mother playing
23 numbers. And it's just a fixed situation
24 where you don't make out, and you
25 subtract from poverty that already

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2 exists.

3 So I was just leveled about it,
4 so I (connection issues) about it,
5 because he was there. Councilman, you
6 know Rodney, and he and I talked about
7 it, and I talked to Representative Brown
8 about it.

9 So I'm here now to ask Council
10 to push this. This has to be regulated,
11 and quite frankly, the folks that I've
12 talked to in my ward, they don't want it.

13 Now, you know, I don't know the
14 regulations that exist, the permits that
15 are involved. I'm not familiar with the
16 L&I issues that may be attached to these
17 machines being placed into communities
18 that are downtrodden. And like the
19 Councilman mentioned, Councilman Jones,
20 you mentioned the stick-up guys. They're
21 waiting for these people to be lucky
22 enough after they pour all of their
23 hard-earned money into these machines to
24 walk out and be robbed and possibly shot.

25 So I'm begging you guys, push

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2 this, please. This needs to be
3 regulated. I would like to see them
4 removed. I don't understand why they
5 just can't have the businesses, the
6 retail businesses, the goods that they
7 sell to add value. Like I said in the
8 beginning, the stop-and-go's are enough.
9 So with this...

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Pete --

11 MR. WILSON: (Connection
12 issues) this afternoon.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
15 Mr. Wilson. And, Pete, when you live in
16 certain zip codes, you see it up close in
17 person and you see people do things out
18 of desperation, wishing on a star, and
19 it's just sometimes disheartening, along
20 with some of the other issues in and
21 around some of those stores, that we
22 really need to take a hard look at these
23 days. And one of the things that we are
24 going to ask going forward is to do a
25 thing called crime mapping to take a look

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2 at the geography of where these shootings
3 go down.

4 Member Gauthier and I share
5 borders along Market Street, and as my
6 grand-kids would say, sometimes at 60th
7 and Market, that's where it goes down.
8 And, you know, you look at all of the
9 elements that go into creating that
10 environment. This is one of them.

11 Thank you for your testimony.

12 Ms. Williams, who is next?

13 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Mr. Chair, I
14 just want to acknowledge that I'm
15 present.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
17 Councilmembers Gym. We will duly note
18 it. Do you have anything to add at this
19 point?

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes. I just
21 wanted to, first of all, thank you, the
22 Council sponsor, for this bill, and I
23 wanted to thank all the guests who are
24 here today to testify about this.

25 If you know anything about me,

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2 you know I have long believed that the
3 exploitation and the profiting off of
4 communities by entities, multi-nationals
5 mostly from the gambling industry, has
6 been nothing less than an attack on
7 communities of color, on young people,
8 college students and others, on seniors,
9 who have given us -- sold us this idea
10 that extraction of dollars out of
11 communities and out of people's pockets
12 is somehow supposed to be couched as
13 economic development for the State. I
14 always thought that that was a gross
15 misrepresentation of economy, economic
16 development, like emphasis on
17 development, and of a modern society.

18 A modern society doesn't count
19 cash in coffers regardless of where it
20 comes from. A modern economy understands
21 that when communities get poorer and
22 somebody else's coffers get richer,
23 something has gone horribly wrong.

24 And so I really want to thank
25 you for tackling this issue. I also want

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2 to emphasize that I think many of us on
3 here worked really hard to say to the
4 State -- one, I oppose State-sponsored
5 gambling, period. I think it's like an
6 abomination of State responsibility, so
7 I'll just put that out there.

8 But that being said, there was
9 supposed to be a limit to casinos. They
10 were supposed to be isolated. They had
11 to get the request of -- they had to be
12 sited. They had to get clearance. They
13 had to get licensed. They had to have
14 all sorts of responsibilities that were
15 placed upon them if you were going to
16 authorize gambling in the State of
17 Pennsylvania.

18 Now, one of the things that
19 many of us who fought that legislation
20 through and through, whether it was in
21 Chinatown, whether it was in South
22 Philadelphia, whether it was in West
23 Philadelphia or all parts in between, was
24 that we believed that this was a slippery
25 slope, that opening the door to these

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2 sittings of casinos would potentially open
3 the door to what we are hearing and the
4 conversation that Mr. Wilson talked about
5 today, which is now allowing it to
6 permeate all manner of a neighborhood's
7 life. And let's be clear, it will not be
8 in just, you know, certain parts of the
9 City. It's going to concentrate itself
10 on vulnerable communities. There is no
11 question about that.

12 So this is a very serious
13 conversation about the quality of our
14 neighborhoods. It's a serious
15 conversation about wealth and wealth
16 preservation. It's a conversation about
17 exploitation and extraction of dollars
18 out of Black, Brown, and immigrant
19 communities.

20 Asian Americans have one of the
21 highest gambling addiction rates amongst
22 communities, and it's no question that
23 it's one of the reasons why you will see
24 strong advocates for controls, for
25 responsible government intervention, and

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2 for what the initial vision was supposed
3 to be, which was very limited casino
4 gambling in the State of Pennsylvania.

5 We are the poorest large city
6 in the country. We are surrounded by
7 five existing gambling casinos already,
8 and the thought that these will now
9 permeate throughout neighborhoods and
10 communities should be something our city
11 takes a strong stand on.

12 It was the State's
13 responsibility to legislate, to limit,
14 and to regulate. They are not allowed to
15 then spread it everywhere across the way.

16 And, you know, as people
17 continue to speak, I hope that you might
18 also weigh in. This is very specifically
19 on these games, and I understand that
20 they can make their way through, but one
21 of the other new means of expansion of
22 gambling beyond the casinos but was
23 supposed to be specifically limited to
24 casinos is off-track sports betting.
25 Those things are also moving their way

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2 through. They're moving their way
3 through your neighborhood restaurant.
4 They could be moving their way through
5 your neighborhood whatever hall. As long
6 as you have a separate end and it's
7 somewhat affiliated with a casino,
8 they're allowing these things to move
9 through.

10 So I'll be interested in
11 hearing -- it's not related to this
12 conversation that the Councilmember has,
13 but I'm interested in hearing whether
14 some of those speakers believe that
15 there's a consistent like issue around
16 off-track sports betting as there would
17 be with these types of machine games that
18 are potentially present in stop-and-go's
19 and delis and your 7-Eleven and Wawa.

20 So thank you very much,
21 Mr. Chair, and I want to thank again all
22 of the testifiers today.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.
24 Samantha.

25 THE CLERK: The next speaker is

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2 Kirsten Britt.

3 MS. BRITT: Good afternoon,
4 everyone. Good afternoon, Chair.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good
6 afternoon. State your name for the
7 record and please begin your testimony.

8 MS. BRITT: Okay. Kirsten,
9 K-I-R-S-T-E-N, Britt, B-R-I-T-T.

10 I first wanted to say that I am
11 in agreement with both sets of remarks
12 from the Chair and also Councilwoman Gym,
13 and everything that I'll say moving
14 forward, we can just add the betting to
15 it as well, because for me gambling is
16 gambling.

17 So today I would like to
18 testify in favor of passing Bill No.
19 210923. As a member of the Cobbs Creek
20 community, I am against anything that
21 does not promote the health, wellness,
22 and safety of our communities. These
23 machines and any kind of betting and
24 gambling are overwhelmingly placed in our
25 communities.

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I just want to share something from an article that just came out October 15th of this year with the Gateway Foundation. It says, Black people represent some of the most significant rates of gambling disorders. Studies show that Black people have over twice the rate of gambling addictions compared to White people. Black youth are also considerably more likely than White youth to engage in gambling activities, leading to problem gambling and addiction later in their lives.

Overall, young Black males are associated with the highest rates of gambling disorders in the United States. Studies have shown that Black people with lower general health measures living in disadvantaged neighborhoods with the lowest income brackets are the most likely to be affected by gambling. Additionally, Black people with gambling disorders are more likely to develop higher rates of anxiety and personality

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2 disorders. They might even develop
3 substance abuse.

4 So in our communities -- when
5 our communities are impacted like this,
6 safety is an issue. Whether it's on our
7 business corridors or in our homes,
8 causing discord and violence, safety is a
9 problem. Our communities do not need
10 another reason to be further destroyed.

11 As we battle upon ways to stop
12 the murders in our city, we should see
13 this as a part of the solution.

14 Let it be on record that all
15 murders aren't met with guns nor do they
16 happen instantly. If you know that by
17 giving someone Item A and that it's
18 misused or it's combined with something
19 like Item B, it could cause their death
20 or demise, and you know that they are
21 prone to misusing it or by no fault of
22 their own, it probably will be combined,
23 would you still give it to them? And if
24 so and they died, would you not feel some
25 responsibility?

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2 Just because you kill me slowly
3 doesn't mean you're not killing me.

4 Poverty, poor education,
5 failing health, high crime, murders, high
6 unemployment, food deserts, and gambling,
7 someone is definitely trying to kill me.

8 Before you allow another
9 casino-like machine, or as they mask
10 themselves as games, that looks like --
11 allow it to infiltrate a community that
12 looks like mine, please ask Whole Foods
13 or Wegmans why they don't feel like a
14 community like mine is worthy of a store
15 like theirs, because in their stores, you
16 won't find bad foods or casino-like
17 machines.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
19 much for your testimony. We appreciate
20 it.

21 Samantha, who is next?

22 THE CLERK: Reverend Donna
23 Jones.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Reverend
25 Jones.

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2 REVEREND JONES: Good
3 afternoon, Councilman Jones --

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good
5 afternoon.

6 REVEREND JONES: -- and our
7 servant Councilpeople who have brought
8 this wonderful bill and necessary bill to
9 us and to our community.

10 I don't have a whole lot of
11 statistics and I don't have a whole lot
12 of anything other than what I've seen as
13 a pastor. And I also need to say just
14 like drinking, I don't have a problem if
15 my people have a cup of wine or something
16 like that with dinner. I do have issues
17 with alcoholism. I do have issues with
18 gambling addiction.

19 I have seen an increase in my
20 community and in my parish. I've seen an
21 increase among our seniors, and sadly,
22 I've seen an increase amongst our young
23 people. I've also seen an increase in
24 addiction to just gambling online in
25 every capacity that leads to -- if the

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2 same addiction is available down the
3 street, it would be almost like every
4 time we looked up, there was beer
5 available, there was crack available.

6 I would suggest and hope and
7 know that we can find better ways of
8 raising revenue than next door gambling.
9 It would be -- it's difficult for us to
10 regulate who gets a cigarette, so to do
11 something like this would be detrimental
12 to the health and safety of our city.

13 It also demonstrates to our
14 children a lack of creativity. There are
15 a billion ways to raise revenue without
16 raising it on the backs of the vulnerable
17 and the desperate. We know what has
18 happened in our community with the stores
19 that do the quick loans, the payday
20 loans. We know that that has been
21 devastating to our families, because once
22 you get one, you get more and more and
23 more.

24 We have families that get
25 addicted and then they can't stop with

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2 crack. We see it with cocaine, and we
3 see it a lot with people who have had
4 trauma in their lives. These are
5 triggers.

6 So we can use our creativity to
7 come up with safer ways over time. The
8 one statistic I did look at was that
9 these solutions are short-term cash
10 solutions just like payday loans.
11 They're short-term cash solutions, but
12 what ends up happening is, they have
13 long-term benefits, and if you talk to
14 the good people at CBH that has a
15 wonderful program for people with
16 addictions, they started including
17 gambling addiction within the last two
18 decades. So how would we have agencies
19 of service to our communities sponsored
20 by our city working against something
21 that we are seeking to increase?

22 So I support your work, your
23 bill, and anything else we can do to keep
24 our communities safe and stop the
25 exploitation of our people and the most

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2 vulnerable citizens of Philadelphia.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
4 Reverend.

5 Let me just say for the record,
6 let's separate the right and wrong of
7 GVTs. Let's separate that, whether
8 you're for it. We don't receive a dime
9 in revenue from those machines. Somebody
10 off of the back of a truck dropped them
11 off at the store, and that relationship
12 is between the machine operator and the
13 owner of the property.

14 The State, the City, there's
15 not a dime that goes in for public
16 education, not a dime that goes into our
17 General Fund to fix potholes, nothing.
18 So all of that money at the end of the
19 day goes back to Texas.

20 Just wanted to put that on the
21 record.

22 REVEREND JONES: Thank you for
23 this bill, and thank you for that
24 clarification. So there's no reason to
25 do it.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes, ma'am.

3 All right. Thank you for your testimony.

4 Ms. Williams, who do we have
5 next?

6 THE CLERK: Councilman Jones,
7 there are no other witnesses present to
8 testify.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Can I
10 be recognized?

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes, you
12 can.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I just
14 wanted to, one, thank you, Mr. Chair, for
15 the bill and I also wanted to thank all
16 of the excellent panelists that just
17 testified, not only for being here today
18 on the bill at issue but for all the
19 important work, Pete Wilson and Kirsten
20 Britt who are doing so much around gun
21 violence and making a better path for our
22 youth and quality of life in our
23 neighborhoods, and Reverend Jones who is
24 doing a host on criminal justice reform
25 and so much more.

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2 So thank you so much for being
3 here on this issue and for everything
4 that you do every day.

5 REVEREND JONES: Thank you for
6 having us and thank you for your work.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
8 you.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: And thank
10 you, Member Gym. I did not know that
11 statistic about Asian addiction to
12 gambling. That was insightful to me to
13 know that, and I think putting it on the
14 record was very important.

15 Are there any others to testify
16 on this bill?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Seeing none,
19 this concludes our public hearing. We
20 will take a brief pause to go into our
21 public meeting. Thank you.

22 - - -

23 (Pause.)

24 - - -

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. Are

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2 we okay to go, Sam?

3 THE CLERK: Yes. We're good.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. We
5 will now begin our public meeting of the
6 Committee on Public Safety to look at
7 Bill No. 210 -- what is that?

8 THE CLERK: 923.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: 923. Thank
10 you for your assistance.

11 With that, can you call the
12 roll to establish a quorum.

13 THE CLERK: Yes.

14 Councilmember Green.

15 (No response.)

16 THE CLERK: Okay.

17 Councilmember Gauthier.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

19 Present.

20 THE CLERK: Councilmember Gym.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Present.

22 THE CLERK: Councilmember

23 Brooks.

24 (No response.)

25 THE CLERK: Vice Chairman

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2 Johnson.

3 (No response.)

4 THE CLERK: Well, we will need
5 at least one of these members to unmute
6 and announce themselves. They're all
7 still logged in.

8 Councilmember Green?

9 (No response.)

10 THE CLERK: Councilmember
11 Brooks?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I apologize.

14 THE CLERK: There we go.

15 And Chairman Jones.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Present.

17 Thank you.

18 And with that, I'd like to
19 recognize --

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN:

21 Councilmember Jones?

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes.

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Before we
24 get into the public meeting, I just had a
25 question, and you provided some

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2 information in the beginning, and I
3 definitely thank you for bringing this
4 legislation. It reminds me of when we
5 had the take-out bill legislation some
6 years ago that was sponsored by Senator
7 Williams, and I just want to make sure
8 that I understand that we at a local
9 level are not preempted in any way in
10 addressing this issue?

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: No, we are
12 not, because we've been promised
13 legislation from the State level five
14 years ago, which never came. We have
15 found out that the State Police attempted
16 to remove these machines from unregulated
17 places other than truck stops and were
18 sued, and what the discussion revolved
19 around was there is no legislation at the
20 State level or any of the local levels
21 governing this, which opens the
22 opportunity for us to create those
23 regulations. The industry outside of
24 truck stops is not regulated by anyone.

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So gaming is

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2 regulated at the State level, but --

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Correct.

4 COUNCILMAN GREEN: -- these --

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: These are
6 skills games. In their mind, these are
7 skills games, which is counterintuitive,
8 but whenever I put up some money and
9 expect to win some money, that's a game
10 of chance, but --

11 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I understand
12 now.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: -- by
14 definition, these are gambling loopholes.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Because it's
16 not considered gaming, that's why we're
17 not preempted, because it's called skills
18 games.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Skills
20 games.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Got you.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right?

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
25 for that important question.

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2 Okay. Are there any other
3 questions?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: If not, I'd
6 like to recognize Member Gauthier for a
7 motion.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I do
9 not have the script. I do not believe
10 that I have the script. I thought since
11 Vice Chair Johnson was here that you did
12 not need me, so I didn't ask for it.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. We're
14 going to take a brief pause while you get
15 the script sent to you and then we will
16 resume shortly.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.

18 THE CLERK: I just sent it
19 over, but it might take a second.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM:
21 Councilmember Green, regarding one of the
22 questions with off-track sports betting,
23 one of the arguments is whether the
24 casino legislation allows for -- this is
25 unrelated to the current bill, to be

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2 clear, which was very site specific for
3 casino licensing -- would allow a casino
4 to contract with an entity not on its
5 site to allow for sports betting, and I
6 think that's one of the areas where an
7 ongoing question of whether the State is
8 not actually sticking to its rules and
9 regulations. So I think that there's a
10 long conversation that we believe the
11 State needs to do a lot better.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

14 Did you receive the script yet?

15 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I'm
16 ready, Mr. Chair.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: We will
18 resume.

19 The Chair recognizes again
20 Member Gauthier.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
22 you, Mr. Chair. I move that Bill No.
23 210923 be reported from this Committee
24 with a favorable recommendation and
25 further move that the rules of Council be

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2 suspended to permit first reading of this
3 bill at the next session of Council.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Is there a
5 second?

6 (Duly seconded.)

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: It has been
8 moved and properly seconded.

9 All those in favor?

10 (Aye.)

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: All those
12 opposed?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: The ayes
15 have it. It has been moved and properly
16 seconded that Bill No. 210923 be reported
17 from this Committee with a favorable
18 recommendation and further that the rules
19 of Council be suspended in order to have
20 first reading of this bill at our next
21 session of Council.

22 All those in favor signify by
23 saying aye.

24 (Aye.)

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: All those

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2 opposed?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: The ayes

5 have it.

6 And this concludes our
7 business, and the motion carries. Thank
8 you very much.

9 This is probably one of the
10 shortest hearings I've ever had. I tend
11 to like the longer ones, but for purposes
12 of your cooperation, we're going to end
13 it quickly.

14 Thank you so very much.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
16 you. Congratulations.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank
18 you.

19 - - -

20 (Committee on Public Safety
21 concluded at 2:48 p.m.)

22 - - -

23

24

25

CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter, and that this is a true and
correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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17:1 18:1	24/7 17:15						
19:1 20:1	250 12:5						
21:1 22:1	<u>3</u>						
23:1 24:1	<u>4</u>						
25:1 26:1	40th 16:9						
27:1 28:1	41st 17:10						
29:1 30:1	48th 16:8						
31:1 32:1	<u>5</u>						
33:1 34:1	50,000 10:12						
35:1 36:1							
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