

Committee on Law and Government

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON LAW AND GOVERNMENT

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, May 27, 2026
10:14 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON,
CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN RUE LANDAU
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

ALSO PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN NINA AHMAD
COUNCILMAN JEFFREY YOUNG, JR.

BILLS: 260076, 260264, 260457, 260458,
260459, 260460
RESOLUTIONS: 260094, 260467, 260270

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2 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

3 RICHARDSON: Good morning. I now
4 note that the hour has come to
5 begin today's hearing.

6 Clerk, will you please
7 call the roll to take attendance.
8 Members who are in attendance will
9 please indicate that you are
10 present when your name is called.

11 THE CLERK:
12 Councilmember Bass.
13 (No response.)

14 THE CLERK:
15 Councilmember O'Neill.

16 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL:
17 Present.

18 THE CLERK:
19 Councilmember Phillips.

20 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
21 Present.

22 THE CLERK:
23 Councilmember Landau.

24 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

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1 Present.

2 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair

3 Brooks.

4 (No response.)

5 THE CLERK: Chair

6 Gilmore Richardson.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

8 RICHARDSON: I am present. Also
9 joining us today for this Committee
10 on Law and Government hearing is
11 Councilmember Nina Ahmad. Thank
12 you. A quorum of the committee is
13 present and this hearing is now
14 called to order.

15 This is a public hearing
16 of the Committee on Law and
17 Government regarding Bill Nos.
18 260264, 260457, 260458, 260459,
19 260460 and 260076 as well as
20 Resolution Nos. 260270, 260467 and
21 260094.

22 Clerk, will you please
23 read the titles of the bills and
24 resolutions.

1 THE CLERK: Bill No.
2 260076, an ordinance providing for
3 the submission to the qualified
4 electors of the City of
5 Philadelphia of the proposal set
6 forth in a Resolution approved by
7 Council proposing an amendment to
8 the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter
9 relating to the creation of the
10 Philadelphia Child Welfare
11 Commission; and authorizing and
12 directing the appropriate officers
13 to publish notice and to make
14 arrangements for the special
15 election.

16 Bill No. 260264, an
17 ordinance providing for the
18 submission to the qualified
19 electors of the City of
20 Philadelphia of the proposal set
21 forth in a Resolution approved by
22 Council proposing an amendment to
23 the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter
24 to provide for the creation of a

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1 Creative Philadelphia, to provide
2 for the powers and duties of such
3 office, and to otherwise provide
4 for incorporation of the office
5 into the City government; and
6 authorizing the appropriate
7 officers to publish notice and to
8 make arrangements for the special
9 election; all under certain terms
10 and conditions.

11 Bill No. 260457, an
12 ordinance providing for the
13 submission to the qualified
14 electors of the City of
15 Philadelphia of an amendment to The
16 Philadelphia Home Rule Charter to
17 change City procurement procedures
18 and requirements; fixing the date
19 of a special election for such
20 purpose; prescribing the form of
21 ballot questions to be voted on;
22 and authorizing the appropriate
23 officers to publish notice and to
24 make arrangements for the special

1 election.

2 Bill No. 260458, an
3 ordinance amending Section 17-103
4 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled
5 "Bonds Relating to Procurement
6 Contracts" to amend requirements
7 related to performance and payment
8 bonds on certain contracts and
9 providing for disclosure and
10 monitoring of the bond acquisition
11 cost, all under certain terms and
12 conditions.

13 Bill No. 260459, an
14 ordinance amending Section 17-109
15 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled
16 "Local Bidding Preferences," by
17 establishing a new category of bid
18 preference for businesses that are
19 both local and small, and amending
20 definition certification, goal
21 setting and reporting requirements,
22 all under certain terms and
23 conditions.

24 Bill No. 260460, an

1 ordinance amending Chapter 17-1400
2 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled
3 "Non-Competitively Bid Contracts;
4 Financial Assistance," by updating
5 references and exclusions, all
6 under certain terms and conditions.

7 Resolution No. 260094, a
8 resolution proposing an amendment
9 to the Philadelphia Home Rule
10 Charter providing for the creation
11 of the Philadelphia Child Welfare
12 Commission; and providing for the
13 submission of the proposed
14 amendment to the electors of
15 Philadelphia.

16 Resolution No. 260270, a
17 resolution proposing an amendment
18 to the Philadelphia Home Rule
19 Charter to provide for the creation
20 of Creative Philadelphia and
21 providing for the submission of the
22 amendment to the electors of
23 Philadelphia.

24 And Resolution No.

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1 260467, a resolution proposing an
2 amendment to the Philadelphia Home
3 Rule Charter to change City
4 procurement procedures and
5 requirements; and providing for the
6 submission of the amendment to the
7 electors of Philadelphia.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

9 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
10 very much. Appreciate the work of
11 the Committee Clerk.

12 The Chair will now
13 recognize Councilmember Ahmad, the
14 sponsor of legislation Bill No.
15 260076 and Resolution No. 260094
16 for remarks.

17 COUNCILWOMAN AHMAD:

18 Thank you, Chair Gilmore
19 Richardson, for holding this
20 important hearing and for guiding
21 this bill through the process to
22 get us here today. I know the
23 committee has a full agenda so I
24 will be brief. And I want to start

1 by saying this is about making sure
2 our most vulnerable and most
3 precious constituents are taken
4 care of.

5 This is really about our
6 children in Philadelphia. So
7 before you is a proposed change to
8 our City Charter. It would create
9 a Philadelphia Child Welfare
10 Commission, a permanent body and an
11 independent body in an advisory
12 capacity. Every day the city makes
13 serious decisions about children
14 and families. The people who live
15 through those decisions, parents,
16 caregivers, and young people who
17 grew up in the system are too often
18 the last ones we ask about how it
19 actually works.

20 This commission gives
21 them a permanent seat at the table.
22 I want to be clear about where this
23 idea came from. It did not come
24 from City Hall. It came straight

1 from constituents who asked us for
2 it. And it is not starting from
3 scratch. There is already an
4 executive order that created this
5 commission.

6 What we are doing today
7 is putting it into the Charter so
8 it lasts no matter who holds
9 office. The commission will do
10 three things that matter to
11 everyday Philadelphians. First, it
12 will hold the Department of Human
13 Services accountable. Second, it
14 will bring transparency with public
15 meetings, public records, and a
16 yearly report on the state of child
17 welfare in this city.

18 And third, it will help
19 people understand what DHS actually
20 does every day, because most people
21 only hear about this department
22 when something goes wrong. There's
23 a lot of good things that are
24 happening to support our families.

1 Let me say also that the
2 commission -- what the commission
3 cannot do, it cannot investigate
4 individual cases. It has no power
5 to force an agency or this Council
6 to act and it cannot dig into
7 confidential family records. This
8 is oversight in the open, plain and
9 simple. But what it does is make
10 sure we are the eyes and ears
11 reporting back to all of
12 Philadelphia.

13 Madam Chair, this
14 hearing is packed and I know our
15 witnesses have given up their time
16 to be here. I want to thank each
17 and every one of them for
18 testifying today. Your voices are
19 exactly why this commission
20 hopefully will be existing. And
21 most importantly, you're going to
22 be in the legislative history, that
23 you cared enough, you came here.
24 Philadelphia cares about their

1 children.

2 And to anyone here who
3 wants to help build this or who
4 needs support along the way, please
5 reach out to my office. We want
6 you to be involved in this work.
7 This is your Commission as much as
8 it is ours.

9 Thank you, Madam Chair.
10 And I look forward to the
11 testimony.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
13 RICHARDSON: Thank you very much,
14 Dr. Ahmad. We truly appreciate all
15 of your work on this bill and
16 resolution.

17 Clerk, will you please
18 call the first panel we have to
19 testify on Bill No. 260076 and
20 Resolution No. 260094.

21 THE CLERK: Kimberly
22 Ali, Commissioner of Department of
23 Human Services.

24 (Witnesses approached

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1 witness table.)

2 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

3 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
4 very much, Commissioner, for being
5 here, to you and to your team.

6 Please state your name for the
7 record and then you can proceed
8 with your testimony.

9 COMMISSIONER ALI: Good
10 morning. I am Kimberly Ali,
11 Commissioner for the Philadelphia
12 Department of Human Services. Good
13 morning, Chairperson Majority
14 Leader Katherine Gilmore Richardson
15 and Vice-Chairperson Kendra Brooks
16 of the Committee on Law and
17 Government, Councilmember Dr. Nina
18 Ahmad as well as other members of
19 City Council.

20 My name is Kimberly Ali,
21 and I have the honor of serving as
22 Commissioner for the Philadelphia
23 Department of Human Services, DHS.
24 Joining me today is Deputy

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1 Commissioner of Child Welfare
2 Operations Robin Chapolini as well
3 as other members of my team. Today
4 we are here to provide testimony on
5 Bill No. 260076, Resolution No.
6 260094 that proposes an amendment
7 to the Philadelphia Home Rule
8 Charter to create a Community Child
9 Welfare commission.

10 The Department of Human
11 Services, DHS, is the county's
12 child welfare and juvenile justice
13 agency. Our mission is to serve
14 Philadelphia's children, youth,
15 families and communities by
16 building on their strengths and
17 advancing safe and supportive
18 environments. Our work at DHS is
19 deeply rooted in the following
20 goals: More children and youth
21 remain safely in their own homes
22 and communities. More children and
23 youth reunified timely or achieve
24 other permanency. A reduction in

1 the number of youth in residential
2 placement and improved children,
3 youth and family well-being.

4 DHS continues to assess
5 the child welfare system in order
6 to build on its strengths and to
7 address its challenges. In doing
8 so, DHS has seen tremendous gains
9 in our child welfare system, which
10 is evidenced by during Fiscal Year
11 2025, DHS provided prevention
12 services to over 1700 families
13 rather than the formal child
14 welfare system.

15 Additionally, there are
16 1582 children and youth receiving
17 services in their own homes and
18 communities, which provides support
19 to their families and prevents them
20 from being separated from their
21 loved ones. As of today, there are
22 2248 children in the child welfare
23 placement, which is down from 5111
24 in 2020. This amounts to 2683 less

1 children in care or a 56% reduction
2 in the number of children and youth
3 who are in the child welfare
4 placement.

5 We prioritize kinship
6 care when a safety threat cannot be
7 controlled and the child requires
8 placement, placing children and
9 youth with kin lessens the trauma
10 that they suffer because they are
11 placed with a family member or
12 someone who knows the child or
13 youth while we work to reunify the
14 family. At DHS, 44% of children
15 are currently placed in kinship
16 care, which is above the national
17 benchmark of 38%.

18 We are also becoming
19 less dependent on residential
20 placements. There are 135 youth
21 and child welfare residential
22 placement. That is down from 468
23 youth in 2020, a 71% reduction in
24 child welfare residential placement

1 at 7.4% of our placement
2 population. DHS is below the state
3 average of 13% and lower than the
4 national average of 9.5%.

5 There are elements of
6 this measure that DHS supports,
7 including a child welfare system
8 that is transparent and one that
9 elevates the voices of individuals
10 with lived experience as a
11 transparent child welfare system
12 that also operates under the Child
13 Protective Services law. DHS
14 publishes on its website quarterly
15 and annual indicator reports that
16 highlight the aggregate child
17 welfare and juvenile justice data.

18 This data provides
19 insight into the child welfare
20 system from when a call comes into
21 the DHS hotline through case
22 closure. DHS also embraces the
23 voices of youth and families by way
24 of our family teen conferences and

1 our crisis rapid response meetings.
2 These meetings are facilitated by
3 DHS social work supervisors who
4 bring the family, youth, their
5 support systems and partners that
6 are involved with their case
7 together to develop a plan to
8 stabilize the family.

9 Additionally, in order
10 to ensure that voices of
11 individuals with lived experience
12 are not only heard but are
13 integrated into DHS, DHS began
14 hiring peer specialists. We
15 currently have two young adults and
16 two parents with lived experience
17 who are employees of DHS. They are
18 civil service employees and their
19 role is to help inform policy
20 practice, training and monitoring
21 evaluation at DHS.

22 DHS recognizes that it
23 is accountable to the people that
24 we are here to serve. Therefore,

1 we are already in the planning
2 stages of reinstituting the Child
3 Welfare Advisory Board. Given
4 this, DHS welcomes the opportunity
5 to work with Councilmember
6 Dr. Ahmad's office and other
7 members of City Council on the
8 establishment of this commission.
9 Thank you for the opportunity to
10 testify today.

11 Please note that I
12 typically stay for the entire
13 duration of City Council hearings
14 when I am called to testify.
15 However, immediately after my
16 testimony, I have to travel to
17 Harrisburg for a state roundtable
18 meeting with the Administrative
19 Office of Pennsylvania Courts,
20 Office of Children and Families in
21 the Courts. These meetings are
22 invaluable as they serve as another
23 tool to help me and my team improve
24 Philadelphia's child welfare

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1 system. I'm looking forward to
2 partnering in the future. Thank
3 you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

5 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
6 very much, Commissioner Ali. We
7 appreciate your willingness to be
8 here this morning, particularly
9 with a very, very busy schedule and
10 having to travel to Harrisburg
11 today.

12 Very briefly, are there
13 any questions for Commissioner Ali
14 before she must depart?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

17 RICHARDSON: Seeing no questions
18 from members of the committee --
19 Councilmember Ahmad, do you have a
20 question for Commissioner Ali?

21 COUNCILWOMAN AHMAD: I
22 know we're moving quickly. So I
23 want to thank you for your
24 testimony. We have conversations,

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1 so we're good. We're good with
2 this. Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

4 RICHARDSON: Okay. I just want to
5 make sure you were okay.

6 Thank you very much,
7 Commissioner. We truly appreciate
8 your willingness to be here this
9 morning and safe travels to
10 Harrisburg. Are you here to give
11 public testimony? You're traveling
12 together?

13 MS. CHAPOLINI: (Shaking
14 head).

15 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

16 RICHARDSON: Received. Just state
17 your name for the record so that we
18 can notate for the stenographer
19 that you're here.

20 MS. CHAPOLINI: Yes.
21 Robin Chapolini, Deputy
22 Commissioner for Child Welfare
23 Operations.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

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1 RICHARDSON: Okay. Thank you.

2 Thank you both so very much.

3 COMMISSIONER ALI: Thank
4 you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

6 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Okay.

7 Clerk, will you please call Panel
8 2.

9 THE CLERK: Stefanie.

10 Arbutina, Vickie Melvin, Otis
11 Bullock and Keisha Hudson.

12 (Witnesses approached
13 witness table.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

15 RICHARDSON: Excellent. Thank you
16 all so much for being here. Please
17 approach the witness table. State
18 your names for the record and then
19 you can proceed with your
20 testimony.

21 MS. ARBUTINA: Stefanie
22 Arbutina, Children First.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

24 RICHARDSON: Please proceed.

1 MS. ARBUTINA: Thank
2 you. Good morning, Chair Gilmore
3 Richardson and members of the Law
4 and Government Committee. I'm
5 Stefanie Arbutina and I serve as
6 the Vulnerable Youth Policy
7 Director at Children First. I'm
8 here today to urge you to establish
9 a Child Welfare Commission in the
10 Philadelphia City Charter, because
11 our children and families deserve a
12 system that's transparent,
13 accountable, and most importantly,
14 centered on their voices.

15 Philadelphia has long
16 recognized the importance of
17 community engagement and child
18 welfare. The Community Oversight
19 Board was created in 2007,
20 continued under Mayor Nutter and
21 re-established by Executive Order
22 in 2018 under Mayor Kenney as the
23 Child Welfare Oversight Board. For
24 years that provided a critical

1 space for board members,
2 stakeholders like us, DHS
3 leadership, parents to review data
4 and discuss system performance.
5 When those meetings stopped in
6 2024, they left a serious gap in
7 public engagement and
8 accountability on systemic issues.

9 That gap matters because
10 the challenges in child welfare are
11 real. For years, Philadelphia
12 placed more children into foster
13 care per capita than any other
14 major city in the country. While,
15 as you of course heard, current
16 Department of Human Services
17 leadership has truly made
18 meaningful progress in expanding
19 prevention and diversion services,
20 keeping more families together.

21 Philadelphia still lags
22 behind its peers. Recent data
23 shows that 3.2 children are
24 separated from their families for

1 every 1000 children in the city.
2 In FY25 alone, 1044 children were
3 removed from their parents, more
4 than the total number of removals
5 in Cook County, Illinois, despite
6 Chicago having about three times
7 the population.

8 And while fewer kids are
9 entering foster care, outcomes for
10 those who do are poor. Family
11 reunification has declined to about
12 a third of cases. More than 10% of
13 children who return home re-enter
14 care within a year, and more young
15 people are leaving the system not
16 to a permanent placement, so
17 without that forever home.

18 Behind these numbers are
19 real people and real painful
20 experiences. Families report being
21 asked to sign documents they don't
22 fully understand. They're unaware
23 of directly how to access available
24 support, like food or rental

1 assistance that could stabilize
2 their homes. They report feeling
3 unheard in court and fear being
4 labeled noncompliant for just
5 asking questions.

6 To be clear, DHS has
7 taken significant steps forward,
8 especially its investment in
9 prevention and community-based
10 services and that engagement with
11 families on the individual case
12 level, and we are grateful we
13 commend that work. But the
14 accountability structures haven't
15 kept pace.

16 Existing data reports
17 are inconsistently available, focus
18 more on the compliance measures
19 over measures of family and child
20 well-being and really lack the
21 context we need to understand
22 trends and systemic issues. A
23 Child Welfare Commission would fill
24 a major void. Embedding it in the

1 City Charter provides a permanent,
2 consistent, transparent, community-
3 centered structure where those with
4 lived experience have a real seat
5 at the table, helping interpret
6 that data, shape policy and
7 co-designing solutions.

8 This is an opportunity
9 to institutionalize transparency,
10 build public trust, and most
11 importantly, improve outcomes for
12 children and families across
13 Philadelphia. I urge you to take
14 this step and move the legislation
15 forward. Thank you.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
17 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
18 very much for your testimony.

19 Please state your name
20 for the record and proceed with
21 your testimony.

22 CHIEF DEFENDER HUDSON:
23 Good morning, Chairperson Gilmore
24 Richardson and members of the

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1 Committee on Law and Government.
2 My name is Keisha Hudson and I
3 serve as Chief Defender at the
4 Defender Association of
5 Philadelphia. On behalf of the
6 Defender Association and Board of
7 Directors, thank you, and thank you
8 to Councilmember Ahmad for the
9 opportunity to speak in support of
10 Resolution 260094, creating a
11 Philadelphia Child Welfare
12 Commission.

13 In addition to our
14 criminal practice, the Defender
15 Association represents children and
16 youth involved in dependency
17 proceedings through our Child
18 Advocacy Unit. Every day, our
19 attorneys and social workers
20 advocate for young people
21 navigating separation from family
22 placement, instability, unmet
23 behavioral needs, school disruption
24 and aging out of care.

1 Last year alone, we
2 represented more than 1400 children
3 and youth in over 5700 hearings.
4 We support this resolution because
5 Philadelphia needs a permanent,
6 independent, community-rooted body
7 focused on how the child welfare
8 system impacts children and
9 families. Too often the people
10 most affected by the system are
11 excluded from conversations shaping
12 it. Families and youth live with
13 the consequences of these decisions
14 every day, but rarely have a
15 meaningful role in evaluating
16 whether the system is truly keeping
17 children safe, supporting families,
18 and improving long-term outcomes.

19 At the Defender
20 Association, we have seen firsthand
21 the value of including impacted
22 youth and families in institutional
23 decision-making through our Youth
24 Action Board and Peer Advocate

1 Program. Young people with lived
2 experience help shape our advocacy,
3 training and priorities. Their
4 perspectives consistently challenge
5 professionals to think differently
6 about support, safety, trust and
7 permanency.

8 Our peer advocates, many
9 of whom have personally navigated
10 the dependency system, build
11 credibility in connection with
12 young people in ways traditional
13 system stakeholders often cannot.
14 Working with and hearing the
15 experiences of these young people
16 has taught us an important lesson.
17 Systems improve when impacted youth
18 and families are treated not simply
19 as clients, but as partners in
20 reform.

21 For that reason, we
22 respectfully urge this Committee to
23 ensure that youth with lived
24 experience are explicitly included

1 as Commission members. We strongly
2 support the introduced amendment to
3 Councilmember Ahmad's Charter
4 change that allows for compensation
5 of commissioners, ensuring
6 participation is accessible and
7 does not depend on someone's
8 ability to volunteer unpaid time.

9 This proposal reflects
10 an important truth: Child welfare
11 systems work best when impacted.
12 Youth and families are not only
13 heard but empowered to help shape
14 policy and practice. Thank you,
15 and I'd like to yield the balance
16 of my time to Duane Price, one of
17 our peer advocates in the Child
18 Advocacy Unit.

19 MR. PRICE: Good
20 morning, Chairwoman and members of
21 City Council. Thank you, Chief
22 Hudson, for yielding your time. My
23 name is Duane Price and I'm a peer
24 advocate with the Child Advocacy

1 Unit with the Defender Association
2 of Philadelphia. In my current
3 role, I work with young people
4 navigating the dependency system,
5 bringing ten years of my own lived
6 experience within the child welfare
7 system to this role every day,
8 because I have walked in their
9 exact shoes.

10 I can build a level of
11 trust that traditional
12 professionals often struggle to
13 reach. In my experience if we want
14 to build, if we want to bridge the
15 gap between high level policy and
16 real world challenges, children and
17 families face treating impacted
18 youth, young people and families as
19 true partners is what could work to
20 create real change. That is why
21 ensuring that children and young
22 people with lived experience,
23 including those who have
24 transitioned out of the system,

1 have a direct seat on this
2 commission. I believe that this is
3 what would work best.

4 The insights of a young
5 person currently navigating foster
6 care are irreplaceable. I
7 constantly see young people whose
8 trauma is consistently worsened
9 because they are caught in the
10 intersection of both the dependency
11 and delinquent systems, and no
12 adult no matter how well meaning
13 they are, can fully duplicate the
14 current day-to-day perspectives of
15 a child in foster care.

16 Putting children and
17 young people directly on this board
18 is what could work to keep this
19 commission genuinely, genuinely
20 community-grounded. And from where
21 I sit, building these practical
22 steps, practical pieces into the
23 framework is what would be best to
24 ensure this commission creates

1 lasting change for the community.
2 So thank you for your time and for
3 considering the perspectives of
4 young people we serve. I welcome
5 any questions you may have.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
7 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
8 very much for your testimony.

9 Please state your name
10 for the record and proceed.

11 MS. MELVIN: Good
12 morning. My name is Vickie Melvin.
13 I am the Chief Operations Officer
14 at the Philadelphia Children's
15 Alliance, and we are the only child
16 advocacy center for the City of
17 Philadelphia. We are accredited by
18 our National Children's Alliance
19 and we serve as a national model
20 for child advocacy centers across
21 the country.

22 For nearly 40 years and
23 for over 40,000 children, we have
24 led a collaborative approach to how

1 child sexual abuse, extreme neglect
2 and witness to violence is
3 confronted, supported and managed
4 in our city. Philadelphia
5 Children's Alliance provides
6 one-on-one services to child
7 victims and their families and also
8 step-by-step approach to healing,
9 recovery and justice.

10 Philadelphia Children's
11 Alliance cannot do the work that we
12 do without our relationships with
13 our city partners. We provide each
14 and every child with the support
15 they need to ensure that they don't
16 fall through the cracks of our
17 child welfare system. We rely on
18 the work and work alongside our
19 city partners, the Department of
20 Human Services, the Special Victims
21 Unit of the Philadelphia Police
22 Department, the District Attorney's
23 Office, St. Christopher's Hospital
24 for Children and Children's

1 Hospital of Philadelphia. We also
2 work very closely with the School
3 District of Philadelphia and
4 provide prevention services and
5 education to our children.

6 This year we have served
7 over 2500 children in our school
8 district. It is this collaborative
9 approach that allows us to work
10 very closely with our families, but
11 we would not be able to do that
12 work without the input of those
13 families and children that we
14 serve. We utilize their lived
15 experiences and their expertise to
16 do our work. Child exploitation is
17 an insidious epidemic. It crosses
18 every social, economic, and
19 cultural landscape, and it has a
20 reach, especially digitally, and it
21 is expanding at an alarming rate.

22 A Child Welfare
23 Oversight Committee with clients
24 who have had lived experience would

1 be able to address this matter and
2 allow us to tackle the issues
3 together from every possible angle.
4 PCA supports the Philadelphia Child
5 Welfare Commission and Dr. Ahmad's
6 intent to continue to strengthen
7 the longstanding relationships
8 across the city that serve the
9 children and families of
10 Philadelphia. Thank you.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
12 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
13 very much for your testimony.

14 You can state your name
15 for the record and proceed with
16 your testimony.

17 MR. BULLOCK: Good
18 morning, Madam Chair,
19 Dr. Councilmember Nina Ahmad,
20 Councilmember Phillips,
21 Councilmember Landau, I saw
22 Councilmember Squilla here earlier,
23 Councilmember O'Neill and good
24 morning, Councilmember Thomas.

1 Thank you for having me. My name
2 is Otis Bullock. I am the CEO of
3 Greater Philadelphia Community
4 Alliance. I am pleased to be here
5 in support of the creation of a
6 Philadelphia Child Welfare
7 Commission.

8 At GPCA, our mission is
9 to break the cycle of generational
10 poverty by ensuring equitable
11 distribution of resources for
12 vulnerable children, families and
13 communities. We are headquartered
14 in the heart of South Philadelphia,
15 with nine locations that provide
16 services across South Philadelphia
17 from river to river, Southwest
18 Philadelphia, West Philadelphia,
19 and Northeast Philadelphia.

20 We believe in
21 transformative change and are
22 dedicated to making it happen. One
23 family, one community and one
24 policy at a time. At GPCA, we take

1 a two-generational approach to
2 achieve our goals, seeking positive
3 outcomes for both children and
4 their caretakers at the same time.

5 We focus on four pillars
6 of service: Children and youth
7 development, family development,
8 community development and housing
9 and economic empowerment. GPCA
10 believes that the ultimate goal of
11 the Philadelphia Child Welfare
12 Commission should create alignment.
13 When a family is involved with DHS,
14 they are often overwhelmed by
15 multiple uncoordinated entities.
16 By ensuring that all professionals,
17 from case managers to city
18 leadership, operate with a common
19 goal and share communication, we
20 can significantly increase the
21 speed and quality of positive
22 outcomes for Philadelphia's
23 children and families.

24 When a family receives

1 services from the child welfare
2 system, they become attached to an
3 abundance of services. This can
4 create confusion in the continuum
5 of care. It's imperative that all
6 professionals are on the same page
7 when it comes to identifying family
8 needs and how we address those
9 needs. This will allow us to
10 increase positive outcomes in a
11 timely manner. We all must have a
12 common goal and a common strategy
13 for ensuring the safety of our
14 children.

15 I think it's important
16 to note and I think some of the
17 other commenters landed on this as
18 well, that poverty is not abuse.
19 GPCA's community umbrella agency
20 reviewed data from about half of
21 the children currently served by
22 our agency. This included about
23 165 children who were referred to
24 CUA 9 in May of 2025 due to safety-

1 related concerns. And from that
2 review, several common
3 circumstances and challenges
4 impacting children and families
5 emerged.

6 We saw housing
7 instability and basic need
8 concerns. We saw substance abuse
9 concerns. We saw physical abuse,
10 neglect and sexual abuse,
11 abandonment, lack of supervision,
12 truancy and educational concerns,
13 behavioral health, parent-child
14 conflict or ungovernable youth
15 concerns. We saw sometimes
16 caregiver absence or no available
17 caregiver resource, and then
18 sometimes the referrals was just
19 invalid or unfounded.

20 In reviewing this
21 breakdown, we believe that it
22 really waves a yellow flag, stating
23 that there are supports that are
24 needed for these families, that

1 families needing support does not
2 necessarily equate to abuse or
3 neglect. It shows the types of
4 resources that interventions need
5 to matriculate a family out of DHS
6 care.

7 Philadelphia has
8 significant need for supportive
9 housing. And children and families
10 exposed to the trauma of child
11 welfare should be given top
12 priority in these resources. This
13 type of prioritization contributes
14 to the ending of generational
15 system involvement. The proposed
16 Child Welfare Commission has a
17 potential to provide accurate
18 accounts of the barriers that
19 families face, data to support a
20 need for more community housing
21 funding, and a coordinated approach
22 by families, advocates and this
23 Administration.

24 Within child welfare,

1 navigating the mental and
2 developmental health of parents and
3 children is also very nuanced. As
4 CUA service providers, we will
5 greatly benefit and appreciative
6 from the expertise of the
7 Philadelphia School District, the
8 Department of Behavioral Health and
9 Intellectual Disability Services
10 and our own DHS leadership to
11 assess whether there may be room
12 for reform. This includes any
13 future considerations for parents
14 registered with IDS or perhaps even
15 specialized court hearings for
16 older youth with complex mental
17 health needs.

18 One of the most
19 significant benefits of the Child
20 Welfare Commission is having
21 multiple systems at the same table
22 with people who can truly speak to
23 how their systems function
24 internally. In that space, each

1 entity can present its processes,
2 expectations and barriers honestly.
3 There then becomes an opportunity
4 to identify where disconnects exist
5 between systems and develop
6 solutions that create a more
7 streamlined experience for
8 families.

9 Many of our families are
10 navigating too many competing
11 systems at the same time. The goal
12 should be to make life easier for
13 children, parents, and caregivers
14 to navigate it in ways that create
15 stronger outcomes for generations
16 that follow them. Again, I thank
17 City Council and the Law and
18 Government Committee for allowing
19 GPCA to provide our input. We
20 strongly support Resolution No.
21 260094 and Bill No. 260076. And we
22 look forward to working further
23 with both Council and this
24 Administration. Thank you.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

2 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
3 so much for your testimony. And
4 for the record, I want to ensure
5 that we're aware we received
6 written testimony from Tracie
7 Johnson, Youth Ombudsperson, City
8 of Philadelphia.

9 Are there any questions
10 for this panel from members of the
11 committee?

12 The Chair recognizes
13 Councilmember Landau.

14 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
15 Thank you. I'm going to kind of
16 keep this broad. The problem was I
17 had some questions for DHS, and I
18 do really respect how much they
19 have to get to Harrisburg. So kind
20 of put them out there. And if you
21 can't answer them or even speculate
22 what the answers are, I'll just
23 deliver them to DHS.

24 But I'm just curious, we

1 all know what the challenges are
2 with DHS and we've heard this over
3 and over. We certainly have a
4 disproportionate number of cases
5 here in Philadelphia and we're
6 doing so much better than we did in
7 the past. We also have a high
8 poverty rate and absolutely don't
9 want people to be punished for
10 living in poverty. And this
11 shouldn't be anything that is held
12 against them.

13 I'm currently fighting
14 for some of the money in the budget
15 to really recreate and bolster the
16 help desk in Family Court. It's a
17 place where families can go receive
18 resources, get help on their court
19 cases. And I really do think some
20 of this is going to be the one-stop
21 shop that we need to make sure that
22 people stay connected and have
23 people on their side and their
24 team.

1 So I'm curious how you
2 see the commission benefiting even
3 the work that you're doing. How do
4 you see it actually playing out
5 day-by-day, including with an
6 Executive Director, how that
7 interplays? I read Tracie
8 Johnson's, the Youth Ombudsperson's
9 testimony. And she said, well, the
10 one thing that the commission
11 doesn't have is it doesn't have
12 enforcement authority, but I do.
13 So I will take this on.

14 And so, one, how does
15 the commission really work with to
16 help solve these problems? And
17 then, two, what role would an
18 Executive Director play?

19 MR. BULLOCK: Is that a
20 question for me?

21 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:
22 Well, it's a question for -- it's
23 really a question for Director Ali.
24 So do your best. And if not, I'm

1 sending them to her.

2 MR. BULLOCK: One of the
3 things that I stated in my own
4 statement is the creation of
5 alignment. I don't think the
6 commission needs any particular
7 authority because the authority
8 already exists within the
9 Administration and amongst you guys
10 to enforce on recommendations. But
11 what it does do is bring all the
12 parties together. It's probably
13 rare or probably never a time where
14 all the competing parties are
15 actually talking to each other from
16 the courts to DHS to the
17 Administration, to the families, to
18 the advocates and even the service
19 providers like myself to all come
20 together at one table, because
21 we're all operating under different
22 systems, different rules and
23 different competing goals. How do
24 we get on the same page. I think

1 the commission really helps us to
2 do that.

3 MS. ARBUTINA: I agree
4 with Otis. That's a major
5 strength, that alignment. And to
6 just piggyback on that, I think I
7 mentioned it -- I did mention it in
8 my testimony. But one of the other
9 things you can do with a commission
10 like this is co-design things
11 together and look at things
12 together. If it's just led by the
13 overseeing entity looking at the
14 data, they can say from their
15 perspective why a thing is
16 happening or why a trend is looking
17 the way it is.

18 But when you've got
19 families at the table, when you've
20 got the folks working with them at
21 a table that are working with many
22 families, they can all say, well,
23 here's what we experience and
24 that's why this is happening. And

1 then they can say all together,
2 what do we do about that. And then
3 that that can be programmatic
4 decisions, that can be how those
5 concrete resources are allocated to
6 best support families that are
7 actually meeting the need. And
8 it's not just kind of one
9 perspective that's looking at it.

10 I'd be happy to talk a
11 little bit more. I did some work
12 on advisory commissions for a child
13 welfare system. So there's a
14 number of ways it could look.
15 Happy to talk more about that
16 offline, but those are the two of
17 the biggest strengths is that
18 co-work together.

19 MR. BULLOCK: I agree.

20 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

21 Okay. Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

23 RICHARDSON: Excellent. Okay.

24 Thank you very much. Prior to

Committee on Law and Government

1 recognizing Dr. Ahmad for questions
2 for this panel, I'd like to
3 recognize the presence of
4 Councilmember Mark Squilla. And I
5 also saw Councilmember Isaiah
6 Thomas.

7 Please, Dr. Ahmad,
8 proceed with your questions for
9 Panel 2.

10 COUNCILWOMAN AHMAD:

11 Thank you, Madam Chair.

12 I will be brief. I was
13 not going to ask too many
14 questions. But I just wanted to be
15 very specific for those who have
16 had experience with the previous
17 iteration of this commission. What
18 was the best thing that worked
19 there and what was lacking in that?
20 Because we're in the design process
21 and how you answer -- thank you for
22 answering my colleague's question
23 exactly how I would have in terms
24 of what the reason for this is. So

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1 if you could, anyone who's had
2 experience for the prior iteration
3 of this commission, if you could
4 respond to that.

5 MS. ARBUTINA: I can say
6 that --

7 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

8 RICHARDSON: Hold on one moment.
9 If you could just restate your name
10 for the record and speak into the
11 mic.

12 MS. ARBUTINA: Yes.
13 Stefanie Arbutina with Children
14 First. I'll say that it's my
15 understanding that there was a
16 portion of the Child Welfare
17 Oversight Board meeting that was
18 just for the members of the
19 oversight board and I was not on
20 that. So I can't speak to that
21 part, but there was a public
22 portion in which the department
23 presented its quarterly indicators
24 data and folks could ask questions

1 of the department about that data.

2 And so, that was really
3 helpful to not just be reading the
4 thing that's posted online, but to
5 hear the department's take on it.
6 And then also be able to ask
7 clarifying questions and have
8 engagement there. That's from our
9 perspective what was helpful. So
10 really important space to interact
11 about that data.

12 COUNCILWOMAN AHMAD:

13 Thank you. And so, I just also
14 wanted to make a brief comment
15 about our peer -- I'm not sure
16 exactly what his terminology, but
17 Duane. I wanted to thank you
18 because you really highlighted
19 exactly what this is about, about
20 the lived experience that should
21 inform us because we're going to
22 gather all this information from
23 this commission to actually do
24 something with it, right. So not

1 only will it be informing the
2 public, having transparency around
3 that, reporting on a regular basis.

4 But more importantly,
5 we're going to be taking that to
6 see how do we then take this data,
7 take this feedback. And to Duane's
8 point, from the lived experience
9 there's nuance in this. And I
10 think not having heard that nuance
11 anywhere else before, it becomes
12 really important.

13 So I want to thank all
14 of you for your testimony. I want
15 to thank everyone who's here. We
16 will need to continue to work with
17 you as we go forward and we need to
18 get this passed, so then we can
19 roll up our sleeves and really show
20 the children. Children are
21 watching us. They are watching us,
22 particularly those in the system.
23 What will you do for us, what have
24 you done and what will you do. So

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1 we have to answer to them. So I
2 thank you all for being here.

3 Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

5 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
6 so much, Dr. Ahmad.

7 MR. BULLOCK: Thank you
8 all. Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

10 RICHARDSON: Okay. Are there any
11 further questions for Panel 2?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: Okay. Seeing none, we
15 thank you all so much for being
16 here. There being no further
17 panels to testify on Bill No.
18 260076 and Resolution No. 260094,
19 is there anyone else here who would
20 like to give public comment on
21 those bills?

22 Okay. What I'll do
23 is -- please approach the witness
24 table and you can state your name

1 for the record.

2 (Witness approached
3 witness table.)

4 MS. WARD CARNEGIE: Yes.

5 Good morning. Good day. My name
6 is Julie Audrey Ward Carnegie.

7 Good day, Councilmembers of
8 Philadelphia, staff members, et.
9 al, assembly of participants
10 supporting what I believe to be
11 necessary change, a necessary
12 alignment -- I need my glasses on
13 and I don't have them here. Do you
14 mind? Are they reading glasses?

15 COUNCILWOMAN AHMAD:

16 (Indicating).

17 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

18 RICHARDSON: That would be helpful.

19 MS. WARD CARNEGIE:

20 Thank you, Doctor.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

22 RICHARDSON: Councilmember

23 responding in realtime to

24 constituent request.

1 MS. WARD CARNEGIE: All
2 right. Now, I can read. And yes,
3 these are fine. Supporting what I
4 believe to be necessary to be a
5 necessary alignment to improve the
6 outlook for our children, youth and
7 young adults. Yes, Councilmember
8 At-large Dr. Nina Ahmad, a charter
9 change for the creation of a
10 Philadelphia Child Welfare
11 Commission as a permanent
12 independent body to advise city
13 agencies and Council closes the gap
14 between what policy says and what
15 families actually live through is
16 the progressive mode toward a
17 coordinated family and child
18 welfare policy.

19 I request that upon
20 voter participation approval to
21 include Bill No. 180888,
22 co-sponsored by Councilwoman Cindy
23 Bass and Councilmember Bill
24 Greenlee, please consider a revote

1 to amend the Philadelphia Health
2 Code, wherein drug manufacturers,
3 agents would be required to
4 register annually with the city's
5 Health Department. I believe
6 addressing this alongside the
7 current initiative will provide a
8 more secure foundation for the City
9 of Philadelphia. Thank you.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

11 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
12 very, very much for your testimony.
13 We appreciate you being here and
14 also the glasses. Thank you so
15 much.

16 There being no further
17 panels and/or witnesses to provide
18 public testimony and public comment
19 on Bill No. 2600760 --

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Oh,
21 there's one more.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

23 RICHARDSON: Okay. Are you here to
24 testify on the child oversight

Committee on Law and Government

1 legislation?

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

3 (Inaudible).

4 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

5 RICHARDSON: Yes. So on the public
6 comment list, I have Nicole Powers,
7 Orlethia Waring, Vonee Hill, Kathy
8 Welsh, Julie Ward, David Thayer,
9 and Phoebe Jones. So you can all
10 approach the witness table.

11 (Witnesses approached
12 witness table.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: Please state your name
15 for the record and then you can
16 proceed with your public comment.

17 MS. HILL: Good morning.

18 My name is Vonee Hill. Good
19 morning, Majority Leader Gilmore
20 Richardson, Councilmember Dr. Ahmad
21 and all members of City Council.
22 Thank you for the opportunity to
23 speak today. My name is Vonee Hill
24 and I'm the founder and executive

1 director of Linked Family Services,
2 a Philadelphia community-based
3 organization focused on family
4 stabilization, maternal wellness
5 and prevention-centered support for
6 caregivers and children.

7 I appreciate the vision
8 behind the proposed Philadelphia
9 Child Welfare Commission because I
10 believe it has the opportunity to
11 provide another layer of oversight,
12 accountability and checks and
13 balances for the department that I
14 know has already begun making
15 intentional shifts in how it serves
16 children, parents and caregivers.

17 I also believe the
18 commission creates an important
19 opportunity for impacted families,
20 community organizations, frontline
21 professionals and caregivers to
22 help shape a more proactive and
23 responsive child welfare system for
24 Philadelphia. Through our work at

1 Linked Family Services, we see
2 every day how consistent
3 relationships, concrete resources,
4 emotional support and prevention-
5 centered engagement can help
6 stabilize families before
7 situations escalate further.

8 One thing I have
9 repeatedly said when asked why
10 Linked Family Services exists to
11 bridge two worlds is this: You
12 cannot talk about child welfare
13 without talking about maternal and
14 caregiver wellness. Ensuring
15 wellness is about more than making
16 referrals and expecting compliance.
17 It means seeing families as people
18 first and understanding that
19 caregiver wellness, financially,
20 emotionally, materially and
21 physically directly impacts child
22 wellness and child safety.

23 My perspective comes
24 from multiple sides of this work.

1 In addition to leading Linked
2 Family Services, I previously
3 worked both as a child advocate
4 social worker, solely ensuring the
5 safety of children and as a
6 supervisor, ensuring the stability
7 of families. So I understand
8 firsthand the complexity of child
9 welfare systems, the importance of
10 accountability and the impact that
11 a commission like this could have
12 on the future of child welfare in
13 Philadelphia.

14 And because I believe
15 systems, no matter which office,
16 should ultimately equip families
17 for long-term stability. One thing
18 I've often told parents during my
19 time as a direct child welfare
20 professional is I loved getting to
21 know you and your family, but
22 respectfully I hope to never see
23 you here in this space again.

24 And I meant that with

1 authenticity and care, because true
2 success should not simply be case
3 closure. It should be long-term
4 family stability, caregiver
5 wellness and ensuring families
6 leave systems feeling supported
7 enough not to return in crisis
8 again. I believe this commission
9 has the opportunity to help
10 strengthen the Department of Human
11 Services even further and help
12 strengthen Philadelphia's child
13 welfare landscape by centering
14 accountability, prevention and
15 long-term wellness of children and
16 caregivers. Thank you for the
17 opportunity to speak, and I look
18 forward to continuing to engage in
19 this process.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
21 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
22 so much for your testimony and
23 thank you for being here and for
24 your work in the community.

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1 Please proceed. State
2 your name for the record.

3 MS. JONES: Hi. I'm
4 Phoebe Jones and I'm splitting my
5 testimony with Carolyn Hill.

6 MS. HILL: Hi. My name
7 is Carolyn Hill. I'm here -- we
8 are Give Us Back Our Children, a
9 grassroots group of mothers and
10 others who have dealings with the
11 child welfare system along with
12 supporters. We have been fighting
13 cases and working to change
14 policies and practices for 20
15 years.

16 Once a month for the
17 last three years we have been
18 outside Family Court, DHS arguing
19 City Council to implement a
20 recommendation that came out of the
21 Special Committee on Child
22 Separation in 2022, especially
23 anything that can be a remedy with
24 concrete help shall not consider

1 neglect, open family court and
2 don't take children from domestic
3 violence survivors.

4 MS. JONES: We are
5 actually not in favor of a child
6 welfare commission that is not
7 specifically tasked with
8 implementing those great
9 recommendations, which will lower
10 child removal rates, keep families
11 together and make children safer.
12 We don't need one more bureaucracy
13 to lobby, as it takes months or
14 years to come up with other
15 recommendations.

16 It took seven years for
17 this one and they're still not
18 implemented. We don't have that
19 time. We and our children are
20 suffering now, especially those of
21 us who are Black, our single
22 mothers or have disabilities. The
23 Child Welfare Commission is
24 supposed to be raising up the

1 voices of the impacted, but our
2 voices who have lost children to
3 the system aren't being heard.

4 When we say commission
5 or no commission, we want City
6 Council to implement the 2022
7 recommendations now. We want the
8 concrete help that the
9 recommendations highlighted to go
10 to mothers to raise children, not
11 to agencies to remove them. We say
12 poverty is not neglect. Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
15 so much for your advocacy and years
16 of advocacy and for being here.
17 And I will tell you that I've
18 looked at your t-shirt because
19 former Councilmember Blondell
20 Reynolds Brown had a cloth with the
21 exact same wording on a cloth.

22 It was a white cloth
23 with purple writing. And
24 everything that it says on your

1 t-shirt, it was on that cloth. And
2 she kept it in her office for 20
3 years in City Council, and she
4 gifted it to me when I became a
5 member of Philadelphia City
6 Council. And it says, Every Mother
7 is a Working Mother. Thank you
8 very, very much.

9 Please state your name
10 for the record and proceed with
11 your testimony.

12 MS. WELSH: Catherine
13 Welsh. Good morning, Madam Chair,
14 Councilmember Dr. Nina Ahmad --

15 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
16 RICHARDSON: Hold on one moment.
17 Ma'am, we need you to speak into
18 the mic so that the stenographer
19 can hear you. Thank you very much.

20 MS. WELSH: Okay. And
21 members of City Council. I'm a
22 Philadelphia resident, and I care
23 deeply about the child welfare
24 system in the city and the children

1 and families it serves. I began my
2 career in child welfare in 1985.
3 Since then, I have held positions
4 in county, state and federal
5 government agencies, nonprofit
6 agencies and consulting companies
7 throughout the United States,
8 including with the Philadelphia
9 Department of Human Services from
10 2005 until 2010.

11 During the
12 administration of Mayor John
13 Street, a child welfare oversight
14 committee was formed in response to
15 the tragic death of Danieal Kelly.
16 Oversight committees continued
17 under various names through the
18 Nutter Administration, the Kenney
19 Administration. These expert
20 committees and community
21 stakeholders helped DHS form the
22 Improving Outcomes for Children
23 initiative, which included the
24 creation of the Community Umbrella

1 Agencies or CUAs.

2 Over a decade has passed
3 since the first CUA has began
4 serving families. The CUA
5 scorecard was established in 2017,
6 four years after the first CUA
7 began serving families. Some of
8 the original CUAs are no longer
9 providing CUA services due to
10 agency closure or liability issues.
11 Staff retention at the CUAs is an
12 issue, with 40% of the CUAs
13 receiving unsatisfactory or
14 critical ratings in the workforce
15 domain in Fiscal Year 2025.

16 Multiple social worker
17 changes can severely disrupt the
18 child welfare process, leading to
19 placement instability, emotional
20 distress and delays in achieving
21 permanency. Maintaining continuity
22 in both placement and social worker
23 relationships is essential for
24 children's safety, well-being and

1 long-term success. High caseloads
2 impact turnover.

3 A time study could be
4 done to determine how many cases a
5 social worker should have and
6 caseload size should be revisited.
7 Workforce recruitment and retention
8 and child welfare is a national
9 problem, not unique to
10 Philadelphia. Rather than being
11 overwhelmed by the issues that face
12 DHS and the CUAs, this is an
13 opportunity through the Child
14 Welfare Commission to learn how the
15 system supports its staff and what
16 is necessary to retain good social
17 workers.

18 Research tells us that
19 training and supervision, including
20 field supervision, are key to
21 retention. The Child Welfare
22 Commission could advise on
23 assisting DHS and the CUAs to
24 develop clear messaging on how this

1 model is intended to work.

2 Clarifying outcomes with metrics
3 that are understandable at the
4 systemic and the case level to
5 determine if the work is being done
6 well by DHS and the CUAs, engaging
7 other systems that impact children
8 and families, schools, hospitals,
9 early intervention, courts, CASA,
10 certainly those with lived
11 experience, housing, behavioral
12 health, public health.

13 I believe that people
14 work in child welfare because they
15 want to keep children safe and
16 strengthen families. Creating a
17 culture that supports the success
18 of children, families and
19 communities and the workforce is
20 possible. Thank you for this
21 opportunity to provide testimony
22 today.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

24 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you

1 so much for your testimony.

2 Please state your name
3 for the record and proceed with
4 your testimony.

5 MR. FAIR: Good morning.
6 My name is David Fair and I am
7 Executive Director of Turning
8 Points for Children, which has been
9 providing support to at-risk
10 children and families for almost
11 two centuries. I have also served
12 in city government as the first
13 Director of the DHS Community-Based
14 Prevention Services Division, and
15 as Director of Community-Based
16 Children's Services for the Office
17 of Mental Health.

18 Councilwoman Ahmad's
19 proposal for the establishment of a
20 permanent Child Welfare Commission
21 could be a critical solution, one
22 that we need to address the
23 concerns raised at the Council
24 hearings that were held last year.

1 As a child and family advocate for
2 over 30 years, I can confirm that
3 the system would benefit greatly
4 from a purposeful, transparent and
5 well-resourced commission of this
6 type to continue its progress over
7 the last several years.

8 Under Commissioner Ali,
9 the number of children placed in
10 foster care has been dramatically
11 reduced from 5111 in 2020 to 2248
12 as of today; a reduction of 56%,
13 and half of those children still in
14 care are living with relatives
15 rather than strangers. This proves
16 we can make progress. This is
17 highly commendable progress,
18 resulting from smart, committed
19 leadership. And now, we need that
20 commitment in those spots for the
21 many other challenges in the child
22 welfare bureaucracy that need to be
23 addressed as well.

24 There is still so much

1 more that could be done for many,
2 if not most, child welfare workers,
3 both public and private. Necessary
4 red tape and inefficiency at all
5 levels still engenders trauma,
6 frustration and helplessness to
7 both families and workers. The sad
8 truth is that despite many efforts
9 over the years to reduce these
10 challenges, the system remains
11 opaque to many of the children and
12 families involved while
13 overburdening both DHS and CUA
14 workers with unnecessary
15 bureaucracy. A well-led and well-
16 funded commission comprised of
17 parents and relatives, youth
18 advocates, DHS and coworkers,
19 professionals, bureaucrats, I
20 believe will create new momentum in
21 addressing the many challenges
22 still facing those of us working to
23 protect children and families.
24 It's critical that the question on

1 the ballot next November be
2 overwhelmingly endorsed by the
3 voters. Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

5 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
6 very much for your testimony.
7 Prior to recognizing the next
8 witness, I'd like to recognize the
9 presence of our Council President
10 Kenyatta Johnson, he was here in
11 the hearing, as well as
12 Councilmember Isaiah Thomas. I
13 know that we have competing
14 schedules today as well as two
15 additional hearings.

16 So, Councilmember
17 Thomas, can I recognize you now for
18 remarks on your bill and
19 resolutions that we can go back to
20 public comment? Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
22 morn -- there we go. Good morning.
23 Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you
24 to all of the members of this

1 committee for the great work you do
2 for the City of Philadelphia.
3 Thank you to Mayor Cherelle Parker
4 as well as Val Gay and the entire
5 Administration for collaborating
6 with City Council and working
7 together collectively to put this
8 initiative on the ballot, to make
9 sure that the office that is
10 responsible for the creative
11 economy in the City of Philadelphia
12 is a permanent one.

13 When we look at where we
14 are, not just here in the City of
15 Philadelphia, but really globally,
16 the creative economy has become one
17 of the most important means of not
18 just communicating, but also an
19 important means of revenue and the
20 ability to collect revenue for
21 individual artists, for arts-based
22 organizations, both for profit and
23 nonprofit. And the conversation
24 we're not having enough is revenue

1 for cities.

2 And so, I'm proud to be
3 the sponsor of this ballot
4 initiative. I appreciate all of
5 the members of City Council,
6 especially my colleague
7 Councilmember Rue Landau, who's in
8 that arts world with me, for
9 supporting this initiative.

10 And as I close out,
11 Madam Chair, I have to actually say
12 thank you to you, Madam Chair,
13 because you and I together got into
14 the arts and culture space when we
15 were freshmen and COVID hit and we
16 started the Arts and Culture Task
17 Force. And that task force has
18 been the driving mechanism of a lot
19 of the work that we've done to
20 continue to advocate for the
21 community. So, Madam Chair, just
22 thank you for allowing me to give a
23 few remarks.

24 Thank you to my

1 colleagues on City Council for
2 supporting this initiative, and
3 we're going to ask the voters in
4 the City of Philadelphia early and
5 often to vote yes on this ballot
6 measure come November.

7 Thank you, Madam Chair.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

9 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
10 so much, Councilmember Thomas.
11 Thank you for your great work in
12 the arts and culture community and
13 we appreciate you coming by the
14 hearing today. Again, we have
15 competing schedules today. We have
16 two additional hearings. So we
17 thank you for your commitment to
18 the arts and culture.

19 Please state your name
20 for the record. Now, we're going
21 to go back. And for the record,
22 Councilmember Thomas was giving
23 remarks for Resolution No. 260270
24 and Bill No. 260264.

1 We are now going back to
2 public comment on Resolution Nos.
3 260094 and Bill No. 260076. Please
4 state your name for the record and
5 proceed with your public comment.

6 MS. HYNANSKY: Good
7 morning. My name is Leah Hynansky.
8 I work with Salvation Army to Stop
9 Trafficking, Philadelphia Anti-
10 Trafficking Coalition and
11 Philadelphia Anti-Trafficking
12 Advocacy Work Group. Thank you,
13 Council, for hearing me today. Too
14 much trauma and other life
15 challenges, along with the
16 inability or the choice not to
17 process intergenerational trauma
18 creates a fear-based system.

19 In my experience, the
20 system in Philadelphia has been
21 fear-based for way too long. I am
22 so grateful for the establishment
23 of the Philadelphia Child Welfare
24 Commission and I think it is long

1 overdue. Every time I come to City
2 Hall I stand by the Orphans' Court
3 sign and I say a prayer for my mom,
4 who grew up in Feltonville on East
5 Loudon Street, often with no heat
6 as a young girl, with ten nieces
7 and nephews of a psychologically-
8 ill brother, a mentally unstable
9 but well-intentioned mother and a
10 violent but loving father.

11 Her parents immigrated
12 here from Ukraine during World War
13 I. My grandfather worked as a
14 carpenter in the Navy Yard and my
15 grandmother worked in a cigarette
16 factory. There was so much
17 violence in that household. My
18 father's family is a part of the
19 last million to arrive in the USA.
20 After the last displaced persons
21 camp was liberated in Germany
22 during World War II, they were
23 forcibly moved from Ukraine to work
24 in Germany.

1 They came through New
2 York and got jobs on a migrant farm
3 in Maryland. There was so much
4 violence in that household. They
5 married and were trying to learn to
6 parent and pay for too many
7 children. Space was full of love,
8 but too much trauma. Even though
9 they had the best intentions, they
10 were young and times were very
11 different then. There was so much
12 violence in that household.

13 I suffered an
14 unbelievable amount of physical
15 harm due to the inability to
16 tolerate and process and look at
17 the traumas. And I was trafficked
18 as a young child and it derailed my
19 whole life. The stigma involved
20 with mental health care was too big
21 for them and for me when I was
22 young and there was no ability or
23 choice to deal effectively with the
24 truth.

1 We are at an age now
2 where we understand trauma and we
3 understand that it is survivable.
4 We can learn to live with it and
5 walk beside it and in a sense, make
6 friends with it. We do not have to
7 constantly combat it and run from
8 it. We can walk with it, grow and
9 learn when we are ready. It's if
10 I'm watching it all on rinse and
11 repeat all these years later. The
12 Ukraine war is raging. There is so
13 much war all over the world and it
14 breaks my heart that it's happening
15 again.

16 But it inspires me to
17 work even harder to be an advocate
18 for change. A lot of people
19 believe in ruling by the hand. If
20 you are hit hard by someone that
21 you love, then maybe you won't test
22 the system and die at the hands of
23 the authorities. Call me naive,
24 but I would love to see a trust-

1 and love-based system with
2 boundaries and healthy
3 consequences. You must be safe,
4 heard and loved to function well.
5 Nobody wants to see children and
6 youth end up in foster care, on the
7 street or in the prison system,
8 working backwards to move to
9 success that they deserved all
10 along in their lives.

11 Philadelphia is a
12 beautiful, diverse and empowered
13 community. This is their voice,
14 their way to communicate with other
15 government agencies so that proper
16 law and policy can be created. I
17 know that Philadelphia can vote yes
18 for this on the ballot question
19 when it comes up. We can trust and
20 support children from the beginning
21 and rework the system without
22 judging one another in the process.
23 We can keep kids out of the system
24 and work it with faith in our

1 children.

2 Philadelphia's kids are
3 the toughest and most resilient
4 children that I have ever
5 encountered, and they deserve only
6 the best. It might take time, but
7 it can work. Every soul comes onto
8 this planet wanting safety and
9 love. My parents wanted that in
10 their childhood and I know that
11 they deserved it. All of
12 Philadelphia's children deserve
13 that hope too. Thank you for the
14 opportunity to speak with you
15 today.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
17 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
18 for being here. And thank you for
19 your public comment.

20 Please state your name
21 for the record and proceed with
22 your public comment.

23 MS. HAMILTON-WEARING:
24 My name is Orlethia Hamilton --

1 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

2 RICHARDSON: Hold the mic up so we
3 can hear you.

4 MS. HAMILTON-WEARING:

5 My name is Orlethia Hamilton-
6 Wearing. Thank you for the
7 opportunity. I just want to
8 apologize. I was so excited to
9 testify today that I left my papers
10 at home so I'm using my phone.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

12 RICHARDSON: It's all good. Thank
13 you.

14 MS. HAMILTON-WEARING:

15 And I do have readers already in
16 here, so please forgive me. So
17 thank you for allowing me to speak
18 today. In 2002, my life changed
19 forever. My husband was accused of
20 the unthinkable, hurting our
21 16-year-old daughter. But the
22 accusations didn't come from her.
23 It came from someone I trusted for
24 seven years, my therapist who

1 already had conflict with my
2 husband.

3 And from that moment,
4 our nightmare began. DHS was
5 called. Suddenly everything I said
6 was twisted to fit their narrative.
7 The more I insist that my husband
8 was innocent, the more I was
9 threatened. I was told my daughter
10 could be taken away and that I
11 could go to jail for not protecting
12 her. At the meetings, I was yelled
13 at, belittled and disrespected.

14 One statement still
15 echoes in my mind. A worker looked
16 at me in front of my daughter and
17 said, I can't believe he had a
18 whole grown woman, but insisted and
19 instead wanted to mess with a
20 child. I thought DHS was supposed
21 to help families, not tear them
22 apart. Meanwhile, my daughter was
23 misled into thinking that she was
24 getting a new home until DHS

1 discovered that she had Type 1
2 diabetes. Then the supervisor
3 coldly said, well, we'll have to
4 rethink this.

5 The accusations forced
6 my husband to resign from the
7 school district where he'd worked
8 for over 20 years. He was arrested
9 and charged without a shred of
10 evidence. I had never felt so
11 alone until I began researching DSS
12 and DHS and false accusations, and
13 what I found was devastating. We
14 were not the only ones.

15 Families all over the
16 country had lived the same
17 nightmare. But instead of letting
18 it break me, I let it fuel me. I
19 went back to school determined to
20 help other families like mine,
21 families who are innocent but
22 destroyed by the system meant to
23 protect. In the end, my husband
24 was found innocent of all charges,

1 and along the way we learned
2 something life-changing. Our
3 daughter is highly functional,
4 autistic level 3 with sensory
5 challenges.

6 What was once seen as
7 suspicious behavior was simply
8 misunderstood, near divergency, a
9 tickle. So we went through all of
10 that for a tickle. I know what it
11 feels to be mislabeled,
12 misunderstood and unheard. I've
13 seen how it can strip someone of
14 their dignity. But I also learned
15 something powerful, that healing is
16 a form of justice. And when people
17 reclaim their voice, they don't
18 just transform their own life.
19 They transform their family, their
20 community and their future.

21 And I would like to say
22 that this is very important to me
23 because I'm still alone. My
24 husband has not come home and we're

1 still living apart because we're
2 too afraid that if it happens once,
3 it'll happen again. So I haven't
4 lived with my husband since March
5 of 2022. So this commission to me
6 is very important because it's no
7 reason why we aren't living
8 together married.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

10 RICHARDSON: Well, thank you so
11 much for sharing your story and for
12 your testimony. I am so sorry
13 about what happened to your family
14 all over a tickle. I'm so sorry.
15 But I appreciate your advocacy and
16 for being here today. And if
17 there's any way that we can
18 continue to help and support at
19 this point, please let us know what
20 we're able to do to try to help or
21 facilitate anything that could be
22 helpful to you all. So very sorry
23 that you all went through that and
24 are continuing to go through it.

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1 The Chair recognizes
2 Councilmember Dr. Anthony Phillips.

3 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

4 Thank you, Chair.

5 I also just want to echo
6 the sentiments of our Chair. Your
7 testimony by far was the most
8 compelling one I heard today for
9 why we need this commission. So
10 thank you so much for being brave
11 enough to share this important
12 story because it's helpful for not
13 only us in City Council, but I'm
14 sure it's a helpful testimony for a
15 lot of those who've been listening,
16 who are listening.

17 MS. HAMILTON-WEARING:

18 Thank you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

20 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
21 very much again for your testimony.
22 And thank you all for being here.
23 We appreciate you.

24 Anyone else here to

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1 provide public comment for Bill No.
2 260076 and Resolution No. 260094?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

5 RICHARDSON: Okay. Seeing none, we
6 will now proceed with Bill Nos.
7 260457, 260458, 260459, 260460,
8 Resolution No. 260467. I'd also
9 like to recognize the presence of
10 Councilmember Jeffrey Jay Young.

11 Clerk, will you please
12 call the first panel we have to
13 testify on Bill Nos. 260457,
14 260458, 260459 and 260460 and
15 Resolution No. 260467.

16 THE CLERK: Will Ronald
17 Hovey, Commissioner of the
18 Procurement Department.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

20 RICHARDSON: Thank you so much for
21 being here. Please approach the
22 witness table.

23 (Witnesses approached
24 witness table.)

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1 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

2 RICHARDSON: You'll state your name
3 for the record and proceed with
4 your testimony. Per the witness
5 list that I have available for
6 questions, Nadir Jones, Director of
7 Office of Business Impact and
8 Economic Advancement. We've also
9 received written testimony from
10 Michelle Flamer, Esq., Garrett
11 O'Dwyer, Policy Director for PACDC.

12 Please state your name
13 for the record and proceed with
14 your testimony -- I apologize. I
15 am going to take the testimony now
16 since it's just one person for this
17 panel, and then we'll end with the
18 creative economy. I apologize that
19 I went out of order. Please
20 proceed.

21 COMMISSIONER HOVEY:
22 Good morning, Chairperson Gilmore
23 Richardson and members of the
24 Committee on Law and Government.

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1 My name is Ronald Hovey and I'm the
2 Procurement Commissioner. I'm here
3 today to provide testimony on Bill
4 Nos. 260457, 260458, 260459 and
5 260460 as well as Resolution No.
6 260467.

7 This legislative package
8 was introduced by yourself,
9 Majority Leader Gilmore Richardson,
10 on behalf of Council President
11 Johnson. I'm joined today by Nadir
12 Jones of the Business Impact and
13 Supplier Diversity Department in
14 the Office of Business Impact and
15 Economic Advancement.

16 I want to thank you for
17 this opportunity to testify today.
18 The Procurement Department, along
19 with the Office of Business Impact
20 and Economic Advancement, is proud
21 to be working closely with the
22 Council President's Office on this
23 package of legislation, and we
24 support the package in its

1 entirety.

2 Together the legislative
3 package will, one, increase
4 economic opportunities for
5 Philadelphia residents and
6 businesses by lowering barriers to
7 participation in local and small
8 business preferences, increasing
9 the threshold under which such
10 preferences are available, and
11 increasing the bidding credits for
12 local and small businesses. Two,
13 will ease the cost of doing
14 business with the city by providing
15 a mechanism to limit the effects of
16 such direct costs as bonds, and
17 simplify the participation
18 requirements for local businesses.

19 With respect to the
20 various bond relief items in
21 260467, we particularly support the
22 bond cost bid exclusion for LBEs
23 and SBEs. However, the other bond-
24 related preferences conflict with

1 Commonwealth's bonding requirements
2 of 8 Public Statute 193.1,
3 requiring payment and performance
4 bonds in full amount of the
5 contract, as such. Including these
6 provisions in the bill may increase
7 confusion.

8 This legislative package
9 is complementary to the unilateral
10 actions of the Department of
11 Procurement and the Office of
12 Business Impact and Economic
13 Advancement that we are taking to
14 streamline and improve our
15 procurement processes and increase
16 accessibility for small and local
17 business services in our
18 communities. These actions include
19 reorganizing procurement. We've
20 created a new shared service unit
21 named the Philadelphia Vendor
22 Cooperative under the Department of
23 Finance and Procurement to provide
24 high-touch, concierge level service

1 to our vendor community and to a
2 single source of truth to our
3 vendor-related processes, systems
4 and data.

5 We are piloting the
6 centralization of all procurement
7 operations in the Procurement
8 Department with a select group of
9 departments, and we are
10 reorganizing the Procurement
11 Department to be ready to manage in
12 a consolidated structure in the
13 future, all with a mission of
14 enabling more efficient and
15 strategic procurement for the city.

16 In the interest of
17 making contracts and solicitations
18 more accessible to businesses,
19 particularly small and local
20 businesses, we're about to engage a
21 firm to rewrite and modernize all
22 of our document templates, that
23 would be contracts, RFPs and bid
24 requests. We're redesigning our

1 business processes and
2 consolidating our procurement
3 systems to eliminate redundant work
4 for our bidders, such as performing
5 one-and-done prequalifications,
6 guiding new firms through becoming
7 an LBE or SBE and retaining company
8 data by vendor rather than by
9 project to reduce or eliminate
10 repeated requests for information
11 and data. These are just a few of
12 the highlights of the steps that we
13 have embarked upon to make it clear
14 that Philadelphia is open for
15 business, that we are increasingly
16 intentional about our engagement
17 with our vendor community and that
18 we are constantly working toward a
19 business-friendly ecosystem that
20 lifts up Philadelphia workers and
21 businesses, while more efficiently
22 delivering the needed goods and
23 services of the city and its
24 residents.

1 Finally, I want to
2 emphasize that this legislative
3 package is just the first in a
4 series of forthcoming legislative
5 packages that will be needed to
6 bring the city's solicitation,
7 contracting and vendor procurement
8 operations into the 21st century.
9 The Parker Administration has
10 additional legislation coming as
11 soon as this fall. Thank you for
12 the opportunity to testify on Bill
13 Nos. 260457, 260458, 260459 and
14 260460 as well as Resolution
15 260467. My colleague Nadir and I
16 are happy to answer questions that
17 the committee has.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
19 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
20 very much for your testimony. And
21 thank you also for being here
22 today. I wanted to thank the two
23 of you for working with Council
24 President Johnson and the team here

1 at City Council relative to this
2 proposed small business program.

3 So I just wanted to
4 thank you for sort of helping to
5 pull together the infrastructure,
6 logistics and the continued vision
7 for economic opportunity in the
8 City of Philadelphia. So thank you
9 very, very much for being here.

10 Are there any questions
11 or any additional questions for
12 these witnesses?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

15 RICHARDSON: And we know we work
16 with you all ad nauseam in those
17 meetings so we appreciate you.

18 Any additional
19 questions?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

22 RICHARDSON: Okay. Seeing none, we
23 thank you very, very much for being
24 here. Appreciate you. Thanks.

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1 COMMISSIONER HOVEY:

2 Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

4 RICHARDSON: Okay. We've done a
5 lot of work with the team in
6 advance of this hearing, so we
7 appreciate that work in advance.
8 My team asked if I needed anything
9 and I would say yes, glasses. I
10 apologize to the creative economy
11 and arts and culture community for
12 bypassing your page in my script.

13 So we are going to take
14 a very brief recess to give you all
15 an opportunity to prepare to come
16 and testify.

17 The Clerk will again
18 call the panels, but we will hear
19 from Valerie Gay, Chief Cultural
20 Officer, Creative Philadelphia;
21 Patricia Aden Wilson; and then we
22 have written testimony from Tom
23 Collins of the Neubauer Family
24 Executive Director and President of

Committee on Law and Government

1 the Barnes Foundation. So we're
2 going to take a very brief recess
3 and return in five minutes. Thank
4 you.

5 (Brief recess.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

7 RICHARDSON: Clerk, will you please
8 call the first panel we have to
9 testify on Bill No. 260264 and
10 Resolution No. 260270. And
11 respectfully, we'll have
12 Councilmember Landau provide
13 opening remarks.

14 THE CLERK: Valerie --

15 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

16 Okay. Thank you so much, Madam
17 Chair.

18 I appreciate you and
19 thank you and everyone for being
20 here today and for your patience.
21 These hearings sometimes do go
22 long. But as most of you know, I'm
23 a longtime supporter of the arts
24 and culture sector here in

1 Philadelphia. I've collaborated
2 with Creative PHL since my very
3 first days in office.

4 Many of you stopped by
5 my office to see one of the
6 rotating exhibits curated by our
7 arts liaison, Lauren Rinaldi and
8 even more, have seen the exhibits
9 that Creative PHL creates all over
10 the building. Creative PHL has
11 become a cornerstone of my work
12 here, and I'd like to uplift and
13 cement the work they have done in
14 not just our City Hall, but our
15 entire city.

16 In the current budget
17 process, I've repeatedly and loudly
18 been advocating for funding to
19 Philadelphia's Cultural Fund, which
20 will uplift the smaller arts
21 organizations throughout
22 Philadelphia. Last year I was
23 proud to secure \$5 million, and
24 this year I hope we can increase it

1 to 6 million. Already we've seen
2 hundreds of people sign onto our
3 petition in support of this
4 funding.

5 It's clear that
6 Philadelphia values the arts. It's
7 clear that we value the impact it
8 has on our communities, and it's
9 clear that Creative PHL has been a
10 major part of that success. That's
11 why Councilmember Thomas and I
12 agreed to this partnership on the
13 Creative Ballot initiative because
14 we, like so many Philadelphians,
15 see the value that Creative PHL
16 adds to our city. Whether it's in
17 the public artworks scattered
18 throughout our neighborhood, the
19 accessible performances or the many
20 resources available for individuals
21 or families to explore the arts in
22 their communities, Creative PHL has
23 left their mark and we need to keep
24 the mark there and here.

1 A ballot initiative like
2 this one will take what I heard
3 from my artist survey in 2024 and
4 put it into practice. Artists want
5 a place to turn to for guidance,
6 for resources, for amplification,
7 and for community. Creative PHL is
8 that place. Creative expression
9 should never depend on the whims of
10 whichever administration happens to
11 be in power. Philadelphia's
12 artists deserve permanence,
13 stability and support.

14 I'm excited to move
15 forward with a possible amending to
16 the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter
17 in order to establish and define
18 the functions of Creative
19 Philadelphia and continue to work
20 alongside them and Councilmember
21 Thomas to promote our incredible
22 arts, culture and creative economy
23 sector. Thank you so much.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

Committee on Law and Government

1 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
2 so much, Councilmember Landau, and
3 thank you for all of your work in
4 the arts and culture community.

5 Please state your name
6 for the record and proceed with
7 your testimony.

8 MS. GAY: Thank you. My
9 name is Valerie Gay. So, Chair
10 Gilmore Richardson and members of
11 the Committee, thank you for the
12 opportunity to testify in support
13 of this legislation establishing
14 Creative Philadelphia as a
15 permanent office within city
16 government. I am Chief Cultural
17 Officer and Executive Director of
18 Creative Philadelphia, and I'd also
19 like to say I'm also representing
20 Chief Deputy Mayor Vanessa Garrett-
21 Hartley. I appreciate the
22 opportunity to speak in support of
23 this legislation and to share why
24 making Creative Philadelphia a

1 permanent office matters for our
2 city.

3 In fact, actually
4 Councilmember Landau just laid out
5 everything I was going to say so
6 this will be repetitive. I also
7 want to thank Councilmember Thomas
8 for sponsoring Resolution No.
9 260270 and for Councilmember Landau
10 joining him to co-sponsor Bill No.
11 260264. Philadelphia is a city
12 whose identity has always been
13 deeply connected to arts and
14 culture.

15 For the city, our
16 creative community drives tourism,
17 fuels neighborhood economies,
18 activates public spaces, support
19 small businesses, strengthens
20 education and contributes to public
21 safety and quality of life. We
22 also know that arts and culture are
23 deeply personal. We can all
24 remember our first live concert or

1 the first time we witnessed
2 beautiful works of art in a museum.

3 Mayor Parker often talks
4 about her humble beginnings and the
5 role the arts has played in her
6 life. Being exposed to music,
7 dance, and poetry early in her life
8 transformed the way she experienced
9 the world. Like Philadelphia, it
10 is a part of her story as well.
11 Yet historically, the structure
12 responsible for stewarding arts and
13 culture has experienced periods of
14 uncertainty and instability.

15 Over multiple
16 administrations, the office
17 responsible for arts and culture
18 and the creative economy has been
19 reduced, restructured or
20 effectively eliminated through
21 funding changes and administrative
22 shifts. The work itself never
23 disappeared because the need never
24 disappeared. And today, public art

1 still requires stewardship.
2 Artists still require support.
3 Communities still gather around
4 music, dance, exhibitions,
5 festivals, and cultural expression.

6 Philadelphia's identity
7 remains inseparable from its
8 creative life and this legislation
9 recognizes that reality and creates
10 continuity regardless of our future
11 political cycles. In addition, our
12 work sits at the intersection of
13 many of our policy goals. We see
14 arts as economic development. We
15 see arts as prevention. We see
16 arts as neighborhood activation.
17 We see arts as public safety. We
18 see arts as public health and well-
19 being. We see arts as a tool for
20 creating stronger communities. We
21 have seen music and creative
22 expression support violence
23 prevention initiatives. We have
24 seen cultural programming activate

1 public spaces and strengthen
2 neighborhood identity. We have
3 seen artists contribute to the
4 economic opportunity and small
5 business growth, and we have seen
6 arts create the sense of connection
7 and belonging that make people feel
8 invested in their communities.

9 Creative Philadelphia
10 serves as a steward of much of that
11 ecosystem. We oversee public art,
12 support artists and cultural
13 organizations, coordinate citywide
14 initiatives and partnerships,
15 convene stakeholders, and connect
16 arts and culture to broader city
17 priorities. We also believe that a
18 healthy cultural ecosystem is one
19 in which all arts and culture can
20 thrive in Philadelphia.

21 That means our world-
22 class legacy institutions that
23 attract visitors from around the
24 globe. It means our culturally

1 specific organizations that
2 preserve, celebrate and elevate the
3 many communities and traditions
4 that make Philadelphia unique. And
5 it means our grassroots and
6 neighborhood-based organizations
7 that often serve as the first point
8 of connection, belonging,
9 inspiration and opportunity within
10 communities.

11 Making Creative
12 Philadelphia permanent recognizes
13 that this work is essential. I
14 want to emphasize that this is not
15 about creating permanence for a
16 person. It is about creating
17 legacy and permanence for civic
18 responsibility. It protects
19 continuity. It protects
20 stewardship. It protects the long-
21 term health of Philadelphia's
22 cultural ecosystem. We often say
23 Philadelphia is a city of
24 neighborhoods. I would add that

1 Philadelphia is also a city of
2 creators. Every day across our
3 city, people are making beauty and
4 making opportunity and making
5 community. And it sends a clear
6 message that arts and culture are
7 not optional for Philadelphia's
8 future. They are fundamental to
9 it.

10 So thank you so much for
11 your leadership, your partnership
12 and your consideration of this
13 legislation. I also want to
14 acknowledge the arts and culture
15 community represented here in this
16 chamber and via their submitted
17 written testimony. In addition to
18 Tom Collins of the Barnes
19 Foundation, Dr. Ashley Jordan of
20 the African American Museum in
21 Philadelphia, who is represented by
22 Samantha Biles here, has also
23 submitted written testimony. And
24 I'm happy to respond to any

1 questions. Thank you.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

3 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
4 so much, Valerie Gay, for your
5 leadership and the creative
6 Philadelphia space. But for all
7 you have done. I don't know how
8 many of us remember many years back
9 when we had our Black History Month
10 program here in Council, and it was
11 all because of your steadfast
12 leadership and work. And I just
13 appreciate all that you do for our
14 city. You are just a wonderful joy
15 to have in leadership and Creative
16 Philadelphia, and have to add a
17 Girls' High girl. So thank you
18 very, very much.

19 MS. GAY: Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

21 RICHARDSON: And I also see Local
22 77. We thank you all so much for
23 being here. We thank you for your
24 presence. Appreciate you as well

1 and all of the creative economy
2 partners who work with us, and
3 understand the importance of
4 investing in and supporting the
5 local creative economy in
6 Philadelphia and what that means
7 for our residual economy. And so,
8 we appreciate that work.

9 It's something I've done
10 for a very long time back to my
11 staffer days with former
12 Councilmember Blondell Reynolds
13 Brown, who was an ardent supporter
14 of arts and culture, as well as
15 working with Councilmember Isaiah
16 Thomas, who has really been leading
17 the charge on this effort and
18 introduced this legislation. And
19 now, with many colleagues who to
20 believe in the importance of making
21 our creative economy permanent in
22 Philadelphia. So thank you very,
23 very much.

24 The Chair now recognizes

1 Councilmember Landau, and then
2 we'll ask Patricia Aden Wilson, if
3 you could just approach the witness
4 table so we can take your
5 testimony. We have several other
6 hearings and meetings today and we
7 need to wrap up in the next 10
8 minutes. Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

10 Great. Thank you so much. Thank
11 you for your testimony, for all the
12 work you do. And thank you to
13 everyone who is here representing
14 the arts community. You really do
15 add so much to our city and we
16 can't thank you enough for what you
17 give to us. I have a couple
18 questions. I'm going to make them
19 in one and would just love to hear
20 the answer.

21 I've been watching how
22 different funding streams have been
23 either precarious or even stopped.
24 And when people kind of are

1 midstream in projects and learning
2 much more about the effect of that,
3 can you talk a little bit more
4 about what does it mean to arts
5 organizations throughout the city,
6 maybe giving some examples of what
7 happens when funding and permanency
8 do not exist?

9 What message does it
10 send to arts organizations when
11 there is permanency? And what can
12 arts organizations actually expect
13 to build on when there is that
14 permanency and real continuity?

15 MS. GAY: Sure. So a
16 couple of things. I think first of
17 all having the instability, just
18 like any organization or any
19 foundation, if the foundation is
20 instable -- or unstable, then the
21 building above it is unstable. And
22 so, if we think about funding as
23 part of stability and leadership as
24 part of stability, whenever there's

1 inconsistency there or a limited,
2 if you will, amount, then that is
3 also inconsistent.

4 It's very difficult to
5 lead an organization. It is very
6 difficult to plan programming.
7 Often times folks will receive a
8 one-year grant, which is wonderful,
9 but we all know even when we're
10 running our own households, if we
11 don't know what's coming in the
12 next year, we're spending an
13 inordinate amount of time trying to
14 raise money more so than trying to
15 actually run the things that we are
16 doing. And so, that instability is
17 there. So multi-year funding is
18 really important, first of all.

19 Secondly, in
20 Philadelphia we have a large number
21 of independent artists who work
22 outside of organizations as well as
23 inside of organizations, and that
24 makes us a very robust community.

1 I would say -- what I'm about to
2 say impacts both the individual
3 creatives as well as the
4 organizations. So when we don't
5 know where to go, one, it is very
6 difficult to have just programmatic
7 dollars and not have general
8 operating dollars.

9 So the general operating
10 dollars are the things that keep
11 the lights on. Often times we will
12 hear folks -- it's less now, but
13 still -- the philanthropic
14 community sometimes or any funders
15 will say, well, we're only going to
16 pay for programming, we don't want
17 to pay for general operating. What
18 is left out of that general
19 operating are the people, the other
20 issues. And so, if we have no one
21 to cover that, that also creates an
22 unspoken instability.

23 So you could give
24 someone \$1 million grant to do a

1 particular program. But I'm
2 only -- I'm not going to touch
3 these other things. It's a very
4 difficult way to run an
5 organization and to support our
6 community. We need to have funding
7 so that our entire community, the
8 people in the community who are
9 running this community, to have
10 these general operating dollars,
11 which act as the foundation on top
12 of which we can then build our
13 programming. So I say that at the
14 individual level.

15 So for example, the
16 Illuminate the Arts grant, that has
17 come primarily through our
18 partnership with Councilmember
19 Thomas' office, the grants that we
20 give to these independent artists
21 and small creative businesses, so
22 what you're hearing, it doesn't
23 matter in structure whether you're
24 an individual, a nonprofit or a

1 for-profit entity in the creative
2 economy, the issues remain the
3 same.

4 Many of them have said
5 the same thing. This money that we
6 receive that has no structure on it
7 sometimes will be the thing that
8 keeps my lights on, sometimes is
9 the money that I need to pay my
10 rent. We get notes, I have letters
11 from folks saying this money
12 allowed us to have our children
13 have food this month.

14 On the other side, we
15 hear from organizations, small and
16 large, saying people take us for
17 granted because we are a large
18 organization, but they don't
19 realize that these general
20 operating dollars allow us to hire
21 more people from Philadelphia who
22 are on the margins, if you will,
23 that are lowest level, if you will.
24 Skill-level employees are often the

1 people that we champion in other
2 sectors, but they're in the arts.

3 And then finally, these
4 small organizations who are
5 receiving these general operating
6 dollars say just like the
7 individuals, these dollars kept us
8 in business. And thank you for
9 this opportunity just to talk about
10 that because we don't often as a
11 sector get to talk about the
12 importance of the difference
13 between programmatic and general
14 operating, and we need both.

15 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

16 Yes. Thank you so much.
17 Appreciate you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

19 RICHARDSON: Thank you so much for
20 underscoring the importance of
21 unrestricted grant dollars and how
22 it can really help local artists in
23 our city.

24 Please state your name

1 for the record and proceed with
2 your testimony.

3 MS. WILSON ADEN: Good
4 morning. My name is Patricia
5 Wilson Aden, and I am the President
6 and CEO of the Greater Philadelphia
7 Cultural Alliance. I will be
8 brief. But I do want to say I am
9 so honored to testify before this
10 committee this morning in support
11 of Resolution 260264, calling for
12 the permanence of Creative PHL.

13 As the leading voice of
14 Greater Philadelphia's arts and
15 culture sector, the Cultural
16 Alliance works to amplify the
17 needs, priorities and impact of our
18 region's creative economy. We
19 proudly represent more than 400
20 member organizations across the
21 region, over 300 of them located
22 right here in the City of
23 Philadelphia.

24 Our membership reflects

1 the full breadth of Philadelphia's
2 cultural ecosystem, large and small
3 organizations, artists and creative
4 entrepreneurs and institutions
5 rooted in neighborhoods across
6 every zip code and Councilmanic
7 District in this city. Many of
8 those organizations are represented
9 in this room this morning. Seeing
10 so many members of our community
11 here with us today is a powerful,
12 tangible demonstration that
13 Philadelphia's arts and culture
14 community and active civic force
15 that generates 3.3 billion in
16 economic impact, believes that arts
17 and culture policies must be
18 treated as essential to
19 Philadelphia's future.

20 Establishing a permanent
21 arts office has long been a goal of
22 Philadelphia's cultural sector. So
23 much so that the Cultural Alliance
24 and our partners identified

1 changing the City's Charter to
2 establish a permanent office as one
3 of five key priorities that we
4 believe will have a transformative
5 impact on our sector in the city as
6 a whole.

7 A permanent office led
8 by a qualified cabinet-level leader
9 will provide the stability,
10 visibility and accountability
11 needed to fully leverage the power
12 of Philadelphia's creative economy.
13 It signals that arts and culture
14 policies are not an afterthought,
15 but a core component of strategies
16 that drive Philadelphia's economic
17 growth, support neighborhoods,
18 create jobs, attract tourism and
19 improve the quality of life for our
20 residents.

21 It will be the
22 administrative manifestation of
23 recognizing arts and culture
24 policies as an integral asset to

1 realizing a bold vision of our
2 city. Bringing Philadelphia on par
3 with New York City, Chicago,
4 Seattle, and other cities committed
5 to leveraging their creative
6 sectors to fuel their economies,
7 generate jobs and enhance the well-
8 being of their residents.

9 We applaud this
10 committee for recognizing this
11 opportunity and for taking action
12 to establish a permanent office
13 that will champion Philadelphia's
14 artists, cultural organizations and
15 creative entrepreneurs while
16 helping strengthen our world-class
17 cultural ecosystem and boost our
18 robust creative economy.

19 The Cultural Alliance
20 and our partners look forward to
21 working with City Council and the
22 Administration in support of
23 passage of this critically
24 important change to our charter.

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1 Thank you.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

3 RICHARDSON: Thank you so much.

4 Thank you for your detailed
5 testimony and again for
6 underscoring that \$3.3 billion in
7 economic impact.

8 The Chair recognizes the
9 presence of Councilmember Cindy
10 Bass, member of Council's Committee
11 on Law and Government.

12 Are there any questions
13 for this panel? The Chair
14 recognizes Councilmember Phillips.

15 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: I
16 have a quick question. If you can
17 just respond quickly to us. Do you
18 see how would this commission help
19 certify that there will be more
20 funding for the arts and culture
21 community, more revenue as a result
22 of this -- not Commission, but this
23 permanent office?

24 MS. GAY: Sure. So I

1 think, first of all, representation
2 matters and having a seat at the
3 table matters. I think the
4 evidence or the proof of concept is
5 what we've been able to do so far.
6 And so, we are on the precipice of
7 bringing to you our first-ever
8 cultural master plan, which we're
9 very excited about. Embedded in
10 that is funding opportunities, but
11 also from an administration
12 perspective.

13 When the Mayor gave her
14 budget address, and embedded in the
15 proposed budget is funding for arts
16 and culture in a way that we
17 haven't seen before, to implement
18 our cultural master plan. And so,
19 these kind of go hand-in-hand, if
20 you will. So having the actual
21 plan as well as the leadership to
22 help drive the plan in partnership
23 with our private sector.

24 MS. WILSON-ADEN: I'd

1 like to answer that as well. What
2 we're talking about here is
3 building the infrastructure for
4 arts and culture. And it takes
5 many parts. It takes a strong
6 cabinet-level representation. It
7 takes an office that provides
8 stewardship for our arts and
9 culture, resources and contacts,
10 and technical assistance for
11 creative entrepreneurs, individual
12 artists and others. But it also
13 takes that funding.

14 What we are talking
15 about when we establish this
16 permanent office is an essential
17 part of that infrastructure that
18 will be reliable even as we go from
19 one administration to the next.
20 And that's something that we
21 haven't had in the past. It's the
22 surety that Philadelphia will have
23 that arts and culture
24 infrastructure in all of its

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1 components as we move forward.

2 Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

4 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
5 very much.

6 Chair now recognizes
7 Councilmember Cindy Bass.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

9 Thank you so much. I want to thank
10 you all for being here today and
11 for your testimony. And as the
12 former Chair of the Committee on
13 Parks & Rec and Arts and Cultural
14 Affairs, this is something that has
15 been discussed before. I'm glad to
16 see it moving forward. I think the
17 timing is right. And it's good to
18 know that there is such a
19 recognition for the value of arts
20 and culture in all of our
21 neighborhoods.

22 And so, one of the
23 things that I would really want to
24 impress upon you all is that every

1 single corner of our city has an
2 opportunity to see artwork in a way
3 that it hasn't. Artwork is
4 plentiful in Center City and sort
5 of like more affluent
6 neighborhoods. But I would love to
7 see more artwork in the
8 neighborhoods I represent, in North
9 Philadelphia and Feltonville and
10 Nicetown and Tioga and Germantown.
11 All of these are areas that are
12 kind of like art deserts.

13 So I really want to
14 impress upon you that as we move
15 forward with making this thing a
16 real office here in the city,
17 something permanent, that we also
18 make permanent, the commitment to
19 being in every single neighborhood,
20 particularly low-income,
21 underserved neighborhoods.

22 MS. GAY: I couldn't
23 agree with you more. Thank you so
24 much for this. Because as a Philly

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1 jawn from Southwest --

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Did
3 you say you're a Philly jawn?

4 MS. GAY: I am a Philly
5 jawn. And I moved back to my
6 community in Southwest Philly. I
7 call it Operation Back to the Hood.
8 Having raised my daughter in Old
9 City, I know firsthand the
10 discrepancy. I see it; yes, I've
11 seen it. And we're bringing art to
12 more communities. So my lived
13 experience gives me even greater
14 fuel that we can be both. We can
15 be a world-class city where folks
16 are coming from around the world to
17 see our amazing museums and go to
18 the Avenue of the Arts and we can
19 be a world-class city for us in our
20 own communities.

21 And so, while I want as
22 many people as possible to come
23 down to Center City, I also want
24 people to be able to thrive in

1 their communities. And I'm just
2 going to point out my former
3 colleagues over here at the Barnes
4 who do that so well in West
5 Philadelphia, and they're moving
6 into North Philly and doing a bunch
7 of things, but really bringing art
8 where people are and saying that
9 your art, your expression is
10 important and we acknowledge it and
11 we want to share what we have, but
12 we also want to see what you have.
13 And we want to do that all over the
14 city.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.
16 Excellent. Looking forward to it.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

18 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
19 again for all of your work and
20 thank you for being here.

21 Are there any additional
22 questions or comments for this
23 witness and for this panel?

24 The Chair recognizes

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1 Councilmember O'Neill.

2 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Just
3 following up on my colleague
4 Cindy's strong recommendations.
5 Far Northeast Philly is kind of a
6 cultural desert in its own right.
7 It's also the highest area in the
8 city of English as a second
9 language. And you put that
10 together -- the one thing that
11 binds us is kids. And schools,
12 whether they be charter, public,
13 Catholic, other, is the place where
14 we really got to start them when
15 they're young, when they love
16 anything that's artistic, even
17 things that they're doing that are
18 not necessarily going to make it to
19 the Museum of Art, but for that
20 child, it really is meaningful.

21 And to keep that going,
22 I think this is an opportunity for
23 the world is your oyster kind of
24 once this office gets permanent and

1 is made permanent, and I think it
2 will be, but it's a lot of work by
3 our colleague, just as the other
4 bill. The At-Large members get to
5 do this kind of stuff and we all in
6 our Districts appreciate it.

7 But I would just focus
8 on the schools, not necessarily
9 where the deserts are because if
10 you go out into the schools, you're
11 going to hit every neighborhood.
12 It's not going to matter. And
13 people in the Northeast should know
14 as much about the Barnes as people
15 in West Philly.

16 MS. GAY: Agreed. Thank
17 you. Last year we did 14 arts and
18 culture town halls, one in each
19 District physically and four
20 online. And to your point,
21 Councilmember O'Neill, we heard the
22 same language used in Council
23 District 10 as we did in Council
24 Districts 8 or 9, which is, oh

1 wait, this is an arts desert,
2 people are not paying attention to
3 us, we really need art here. We
4 want to work with schools. And so,
5 I am really proud that we have a
6 strong relationship with not only
7 the Philadelphia School District as
8 well as other districts, if you
9 will, or the independents as well
10 as the Mayor's Office of Education.
11 And so, that is absolutely on our
12 radar, and to make sure that as
13 many people as possible have the
14 opportunity to experience the arts.

15 MS. WILSON-ADEN: I'd
16 like to comment on that as well.
17 The connection between exposure to
18 the arts and educational attainment
19 is well-documented. So you're
20 exactly right. Providing children
21 with arts experiences can transform
22 their lives. Low-income children
23 who are exposed to arts have better
24 attendance records. High school

1 students who are exposed to arts
2 score 100 points higher on their
3 SATs. That means that they're
4 getting into colleges of their
5 choice. That changes the
6 trajectory of their lives.

7 We do have areas that
8 might not have as robust arts
9 organizations or activities. But
10 what I will say is let's recognize
11 the breadth and diversity of our
12 cultural experiences. So while we
13 talk about the visual arts and the
14 performing arts, let's also
15 recognize our heritage sites.
16 Let's recognize our green spaces.
17 All of these things contribute to
18 our cultural heritage and offer
19 opportunities to enrich not only
20 the lives of our young children,
21 but our seniors as well.

22 Finally, I'd like to say
23 that one thing that we're working
24 on together is exploding the myth

1 that working within the creative
2 economy is not a viable career
3 option. We want children to
4 understand and parents to
5 appreciate that children who are
6 engaged in the arts can, in fact,
7 follow their dreams and their
8 passions and find viable careers in
9 arts and culture.

10 That's why the Greater
11 Philadelphia Cultural Alliance has
12 a program called the Bloomberg Arts
13 Internship Program, where we take
14 rising high school seniors and we
15 give them viable jobs. We're
16 paying them \$20 an hour. We're
17 giving them stipends for travel and
18 we're making sure that they have
19 the opportunity to work with
20 cultural sites throughout our city,
21 in every single Councilmanic
22 District so that they have a choice
23 between working in McDonald's or
24 working at Glenn Ford. So these

1 are the ways that we are working
2 together to make sure that we have
3 that infrastructure that really
4 leverages the opportunities and
5 potential of our creative economy.

6 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL:

7 Madam Chair, I really appreciate
8 that. When the numbers can back
9 you up, it's always a stronger
10 argument. But the other place I
11 wasn't thinking about, but it's
12 right in front of me, is our
13 playgrounds, our rec centers, our
14 rec leaders. A lot of times the
15 tumbling program, a dance program
16 is in a very small building
17 sometimes and is the first
18 introduction to the arts of a
19 child. And so, even Steven with
20 the schools should be our
21 programming and our rec centers.
22 And I think this office can have a
23 great impact on that.
24

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1 MS. GAY: Thank you.

2 Absolutely. And we do have also a
3 very strong relationship with our
4 Office of Parks & Rec and
5 Commissioner Susan Slawson, who is
6 a great partner for us.

7 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: If
8 you're going to do it, do it while
9 Susan's here. Okay. Thank you.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

11 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
12 so much, Councilmember O'Neill.
13 And I must add based on the
14 testimony that we just heard, that
15 I'm grateful for the partnership
16 that we are undertaking and have
17 for the last four or five years now
18 with Live Nation Urban and one of
19 their Senior VP's, Brandon Pankey,
20 who's also a Philadelphia public
21 school graduate by way of
22 Masterman.

23 But we will have our
24 program for the young people in

1 advance of the Roots Picnic, where
2 they will have the opportunity to
3 see behind the scenes jobs and
4 careers around festivals and work
5 in the arts and culture space that
6 you don't normally think about.

7 And so, that program
8 will be Thursday, tomorrow back of
9 course at Belmont Mansion. So
10 we're looking forward to hosting
11 our young people again from our
12 public school system for their
13 behind-the-scenes tour of the Roots
14 Picnic. So I had to add that in
15 because it's tomorrow.

16 The Chair recognizes
17 Dr. Anthony Phillips.

18 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
19 Thank you. I just had a quick
20 question for you to respond
21 possibly in less than 30 seconds.
22 When is the Arts master plan
23 projected to be completed? I just
24 wanted to get a better sense. If I

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1 missed that, I apologize. But the
2 master plan, the plan that you
3 talked about, the Creative Plan for
4 the City of Philadelphia, when
5 would that be completed?

6 MS. GAY: We hope to
7 have it in front of you all when
8 you come back in the fall. So our
9 goal is starting in September to
10 really start to implement.

11 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
12 Thank you so much. I appreciate
13 it. And also suggest our
14 commercial corridors --

15 MS. GAY: Absolutely.

16 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: --
17 spaces to activate art because most
18 of these neighborhoods, people use
19 the commercial corridors.

20 MS. GAY: Yes.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
22 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
23 so much for your testimony. And
24 thank you for being here.

1 Seeing no further
2 questions for this panel and for
3 these witnesses, we will now ask
4 the two individuals who will have
5 public comment to approach the
6 witness table.

7 THE CLERK: Irene Foley.
8 (Witnesses approached
9 witness table.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
11 RICHARDSON: Okay. Please state
12 your name for the record and please
13 give an abbreviated version of your
14 public comment. We have one more
15 hearing so we got to give the
16 stenographer an opportunity to turn
17 over. Thank you. Please proceed.

18 MR. EDWARDS: My name is
19 Steven David Edwards, thank you for
20 the opportunity, CEO of Silent
21 Philly. That's an entertainment
22 brand here in Philadelphia that's
23 been bringing Philadelphia together
24 for 11 years. So I categorize

1 myself and my company as prior to
2 there being a One Philly mantra,
3 there was Silent Philly, which is
4 an event that has three different
5 DJs. They do three different types
6 of music. But more importantly,
7 they do all music.

8 So I do want to tell the
9 city -- I want to speak on what Val
10 said. She brought up one good
11 point about it being not just about
12 funding, but funding yearly, right.
13 That's very important. Just a
14 little story. I mean, our company
15 is 11 years of us doing this,
16 bringing the city together. And
17 I'll tell you something that
18 touched my heart when I found out
19 you were in Parks & Rec, Ms. Bass.

20 There was a critical
21 time in our company where we were
22 on the ropes. It was during COVID
23 and our company was getting ready
24 to -- well, wasn't getting ready to

1 go, it was going down. And we got
2 a call from Mark Wilks, I believe.
3 And Mark Wilks gave us a grant to
4 allow us to do Silent Philly
5 parties out in the blocks to keep
6 the social distancing in
7 Philadelphia. And that's what kept
8 our business alive that year.

9 Fast-forward to this
10 year. Michael Newmuis identified
11 us and our brand as a leader. And
12 we got one of those grants from the
13 City of Philadelphia to put on an
14 event. So last year we did a One
15 Philly festival after the Mayor.
16 It went really good. And this year
17 with that grant money we're doing
18 it again this year, but bigger with
19 Philadelphia Freeway performing.

20 And what we'll be doing
21 is bringing ten of the best genres
22 of music that Philadelphia has to
23 offer under one roof. So we'll
24 have music from R&B, classical with

1 my guys here in (inaudible), jazz,
2 hip-hop, R&B, Latin, gospel. And
3 I'm asking all of you guys, I'm
4 hoping to see your faces there.
5 That's going to be on July 10th.
6 I'm working with Councilman Squilla
7 for that. So it's going to be an
8 MLB All-Star activation. That's
9 what I got the -- so thank you for
10 the funds. I definitely appreciate
11 you.

12 And then the last thing
13 I want to say before I leave is
14 this: I feel you guys are very
15 spirited in giving, very spirited
16 of giving us our praise, the
17 citations. I've been coming to
18 City Council all year this year to
19 see what you guys do. But one
20 thing that I do ask of you is to
21 also to bring awareness to what we
22 do, because I'm throwing a FIFA pre
23 kick-off celebration party here in
24 Philadelphia right here in City

1 Hall on June 6th, right.

2 But we don't see
3 anything about that on the Visit
4 Philly. We don't see anything
5 about that on the CCDs. But we do
6 see the Live Nation urban stuff.
7 So we need to see the local people
8 who work so hard to bring this city
9 together. We need it to be
10 awareness. It should be flyers all
11 up in City Hall saying, hey guys,
12 guess what, you work here, why not
13 come party in the courtyard, right.

14 I am a local person.
15 You guys did give me money to do
16 these things so help me, and that's
17 what I'm asking. But thank you for
18 your time. I appreciate you guys.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

20 RICHARDSON: Thank you for your
21 great work. And listen, I need you
22 to help us help you. So if you can
23 get the flyers that you're
24 specifically referring to,

1 particularly for this summer's
2 activations to me as the Chair,
3 I'll be sure to disseminate it to
4 all members of the Committee and
5 all members of Council.

6 MR. EDWARDS: Thank you
7 so much.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

9 RICHARDSON: And then I'll
10 personally commit to, once we
11 receive it, ensuring that we have
12 the flyers placed on all the
13 boards.

14 MR. EDWARDS: We just
15 want to show the tourists how we
16 party here in the heart of the city
17 on June 6th, from 7:00 p.m. to
18 1:00 a.m.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

20 RICHARDSON: Okay. We'll get them
21 up on the board and just get them
22 to me. Okay. And we'll get them
23 up on all the boards on all four
24 quadrants.

1 MR. EDWARDS: Thank you.

2 I look forward to working with you
3 all this year.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

5 RICHARDSON: Thank you. We
6 appreciate it. And congratulations
7 to you. You've been doing a really
8 good job. I remember seeing you
9 throughout the years, so
10 congratulations.

11 Please state your name
12 for the record and proceed with
13 your testimony.

14 MS. FOLEY-CHORT: My
15 name is Irene Foley-Chort, also
16 known as Rose Love. I'm proud to
17 be a city resident and an
18 independent artist as part of
19 Philadelphia's vibrant creative
20 community. My mission is to spread
21 love and joy wherever I go and
22 whenever I perform. I've
23 experienced this city as a
24 welcoming, supportive place where

1 artists and self-expression can
2 thrive. I believe the arts provide
3 healing, inspiration, connection
4 and growth for people from all
5 walks of life.

6 When creativity is
7 encouraged, both individuals and
8 communities become healthier, more
9 compassionate and more open to
10 innovative solutions to many
11 problems. My own lived experience
12 is a clear example of this. Please
13 provide the funding requested and
14 make Creative feel permanent.
15 Thank you.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
17 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you
18 so much for being here as an
19 independent artist. And I'll say I
20 love your outfit because it reminds
21 me of my birthday, which is
22 Valentine's Day. So thank you.
23 Love and spreading love and joy in
24 Philadelphia. So thank you very

Committee on Law and Government

1 much. We truly appreciate you
2 being here.

3 Is there anyone else
4 here to testify whose name has not
5 been called or to give public
6 comment?

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

9 RICHARDSON: Okay. Seeing none, we
10 will now proceed and conclude the
11 public hearing. We will now begin
12 the public meeting on the
13 previously mentioned bills and
14 resolutions.

15 And, Clerk, will you
16 please call the roll to take
17 attendance. Members who are in
18 attendance will please indicate
19 that you are present when your name
20 is called.

21 THE CLERK: Councilmember
22 Bass.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
24 Present.

Committee on Law and Government

1 THE CLERK:

2 Councilmember O'Neill.

3 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL:

4 Present.

5 THE CLERK:

6 Councilmember Squilla.

7 (No response.)

8 THE CLERK:

9 Councilmember Phillips.

10 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

11 Present.

12 THE CLERK:

13 Councilmember Landau.

14 COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

15 Present.

16 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair

17 Brooks.

18 (No response.)

19 THE CLERK: Chair

20 Gilmore Richardson.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

22 RICHARDSON: I am present. And for

23 the record, during our previous

24 hearing, we had Council President

Committee on Law and Government

1 Kenyatta Johnson, Councilmember
2 Ahmad, Councilmember Thomas and
3 Councilmember Jay Young. Thank
4 you. A quorum of the committee is
5 now present.

6 The Chair recognizes
7 Councilmember Phillips for a motion
8 on the amendment to Resolution No.
9 260094.

10 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

11 Thank you, Madam Chair.

12 I offer an amendment to
13 Resolution 260094. A copy of the
14 amendment has been circulated to
15 all members of the Committee. I
16 move that the amendment to
17 Resolution No. 260094 be approved.

18 (Duly seconded.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

20 RICHARDSON: The Chair notes for
21 the record that Councilmember Bass
22 seconds the motion. It has been
23 moved and properly seconded that
24 the amendment to Resolution No.

Committee on Law and Government

1 260094 be approved.

2 All those in favor of
3 the motion will indicate by stating
4 aye.

5 (Aye.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

7 RICHARDSON: All those opposed?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

10 RICHARDSON: The ayes have it and
11 the motion carries. The amendment
12 to Resolution No. 260094 has been
13 approved.

14 The Chair now recognizes
15 Councilmember Phillips for a motion
16 on Resolution No. 260094 as
17 amended.

18 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

19 Thank you, Chair.

20 I move that Resolution
21 No. 260094 as amended be reported
22 from this committee with a
23 favorable recommendation.

24 (Duly seconded.)

1 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

2 RICHARDSON: The Chair notes for
3 the record that Councilmember Bass
4 seconds the motion. It has been
5 moved and properly seconded that
6 Resolution No. 260094 as amended be
7 reported from this committee with a
8 favorable recommendation and
9 further move that the rules of
10 Council be suspended as to permit
11 first reading of this, as to have a
12 favorable recommendation from
13 committee.

14 All those in favor of
15 the motion will signify by stating
16 aye.

17 (Aye.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

19 RICHARDSON: Any opposed?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

22 RICHARDSON: The ayes have it and
23 the motion carries. And Resolution
24 No. 260094 as amended will be

Committee on Law and Government

1 reported from this committee with a
2 favorable recommendation.

3 The Chair recognizes
4 Councilmember Phillips for a motion
5 on Bill No. 260076.

6 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

7 Thank you, Madam Chair.

8 I move that Bill No.
9 260076 be reported from this
10 committee with a favorable
11 recommendation and further move
12 that the rules of Council be
13 suspended to permit first reading
14 of this bill at the next session of
15 Council.

16 (Duly seconded.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

18 RICHARDSON: The Chair notes for
19 the record that Councilmember Bass
20 seconds the motion. It has been
21 moved and properly seconded that
22 Bill No. 260076 be reported from
23 this Committee with a favorable
24 recommendation and further move

Committee on Law and Government

1 that the rules of Council be
2 suspended as to permit first
3 reading of this bill at the next
4 session of Council.

5 All those in favor of
6 the motion will indicate by stating
7 aye.

8 (Aye.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

10 RICHARDSON: Any opposed?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

13 RICHARDSON: The ayes have it and
14 the motion carries.

15 The Chair now recognizes
16 Councilmember Phillips for a motion
17 on Resolution No. 260270.

18 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

19 Thank you, Madam Chair.

20 I move that Resolution
21 No. 260270 be reported from this
22 committee with a favorable
23 recommendation.

24 (Duly seconded.)

Committee on Law and Government

1 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

2 RICHARDSON: The Chair notes for
3 the record that Councilmember Bass
4 seconds the motion. It has been
5 moved and properly seconded that
6 Resolution No. 260270 be reported
7 from this committee with a
8 favorable recommendation.

9 All those in favor of
10 the motion will signify by stating
11 aye.

12 (Aye.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: Any opposed?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

17 RICHARDSON: The ayes have it and
18 the motion carries. Resolution No.
19 260270 will be reported from this
20 committee with a favorable
21 recommendation.

22 The Chair recognizes
23 Councilmember Phillips for a motion
24 on Bill No. 260264.

Committee on Law and Government

1 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

2 Thank you, Madam Chair.

3 I move that Bill No.

4 260264 be reported from this

5 committee with a favorable

6 recommendation and further move

7 that the rules of Council be

8 suspended to permit first reading

9 of this bill at the next session of

10 Council.

11 (Duly seconded.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

13 RICHARDSON: The Chair notes for

14 the record that Councilmember

15 seconds the motion. It has been

16 moved and properly seconded that

17 Bill No. 260264 be reported from

18 this committee with a favorable

19 recommendation and further move

20 that the rules of Council be

21 suspended as to permit first

22 reading at the next session of

23 Council.

24 All those in favor of

Committee on Law and Government

1 the motion will indicate by stating
2 aye.

3 (Aye.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

5 RICHARDSON: All those opposed?

6 (No response.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

8 RICHARDSON: The ayes have it and
9 the motion carries. Bill No.
10 260264 will be reported from this
11 committee with a favorable
12 recommendation with a request that
13 the rules of Council be suspended
14 to permit first reading at the next
15 session of Council.

16 The Chair now recognizes
17 Councilmember Phillips for a motion
18 on Resolution No. 260467.

19 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

20 Thank you, Madam Chair.

21 I move that Resolution
22 No. 260467 be reported from this
23 committee with a favorable
24 recommendation.

Committee on Law and Government

1 (Duly seconded.)

2 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

3 RICHARDSON: The Chair notes for
4 the record that Councilmember Bass
5 seconds the motion. It has been
6 moved and properly seconded that
7 Resolution No. 260467 be reported
8 from this committee with a
9 favorable recommendation.

10 All those in favor of
11 the motion will indicate by stating
12 aye.

13 (Aye.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

15 RICHARDSON: Those opposed?

16 (No response.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

18 RICHARDSON: The ayes have it and
19 the motion carries. Resolution No.
20 260467 will be reported from this
21 committee with a favorable
22 recommendation.

23 The Chair recognizes
24 Councilmember Phillips for a motion

Committee on Law and Government

1 on the amendment to Bill No.
2 260457.

3 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

4 Thank you, Madam Chair.

5 I offer an amendment to
6 Bill No. 260457. A copy of the
7 amendment has been circulated to
8 all members of this committee. I
9 move that the amendment to Bill No.
10 260457 be approved.

11 (Duly seconded.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

13 RICHARDSON: The Chair notes for
14 the record that Councilmember Bass
15 seconds the motion. It has been
16 moved and properly seconded that
17 the amendment to Bill No. 260457 be
18 approved.

19 All those in favor of
20 the motion will indicate by stating
21 aye.

22 (Aye.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

24 RICHARDSON: Any opposed?

Committee on Law and Government

1 (No response.)

2 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

3 RICHARDSON: The ayes have it and
4 the motion carries. The amendment
5 to Bill No. 260457 has been
6 approved.

7 The Chair recognizes
8 Councilmember Phillips for a motion
9 on Bill No. 260457.

10 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

11 Thank you, Madam Chair.

12 I move that Bill No.
13 260457 as amended be reported from
14 this committee with a favorable
15 recommendation and further move
16 that the rules of Council be
17 suspended to permit first reading
18 of this bill at the next session of
19 Council.

20 (Duly seconded.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

22 RICHARDSON: The Chair notes for
23 the record that Councilmember Bass
24 seconds the motion. It has been

Committee on Law and Government

1 moved and properly seconded that
2 Bill No. 260457 as amended be
3 reported from this committee with a
4 favorable recommendation and
5 further move that the rules of
6 Council be suspended to permit
7 first reading of this bill at the
8 next session of Council.

9 All those in favor of
10 the motion will indicate by stating
11 aye.

12 (Aye.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: Any opposed?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

17 RICHARDSON: The ayes have it and
18 the motion carries. Bill No.
19 260457 as amended will be reported
20 from this committee with a
21 favorable recommendation with a
22 request that the rules of Council
23 be suspended as to permit first
24 reading at the next session of

Committee on Law and Government

1 Council.

2 The Chair recognizes
3 Councilmember Phillips for a motion
4 on Bill No. 260458.

5 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

6 Thank you, Madam Chair.

7 I move that Bill No.
8 260458 be reported from this
9 committee with a favorable
10 recommendation and further move
11 that the rules of Council be
12 suspended to permit first reading
13 of this bill at the next session of
14 Council.

15 (Duly seconded.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

17 RICHARDSON: The Chair notes for
18 the record that Councilmember Bass
19 seconds the motion. It has been
20 moved and properly seconded that
21 Bill No. 260458 be reported from
22 this committee with a favorable
23 recommendation and further move
24 that the rules of Council be

Committee on Law and Government

1 suspended as to permit first
2 reading at the next session of
3 Council.

4 All those in favor of
5 the motion will indicate by stating
6 aye.

7 (Aye.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

9 RICHARDSON: Any opposed?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

12 RICHARDSON: The ayes have it and
13 the motion carries. Bill No.
14 260458 will be reported from this
15 committee with a favorable
16 recommendation with a request that
17 the rules of Council be suspended
18 as to permit first reading at the
19 next session of Council.

20 (Duly seconded.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

22 RICHARDSON: The Chair recognizes
23 Councilmember Phillips for a motion
24 on the amendment to Bill No.

Committee on Law and Government

1 260459.

2 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

3 Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 I offer an amendment to
5 Bill No. 260459. A copy of the
6 amendment has been circulated to
7 all members of this committee. I
8 move that the amendment to Bill No.
9 260459 be approved.

10 (Duly seconded.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

12 RICHARDSON: The Chair notes for
13 the record that Councilmember Bass
14 seconds the motion. It has been
15 moved and properly seconded that
16 the amendment to Bill No. 260459 be
17 approved.

18 All those in favor of
19 the motion will indicate by stating
20 aye.

21 (Aye.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

23 RICHARDSON: Any opposed?

24 (No response.)

1 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

2 RICHARDSON: The ayes have it and
3 the amendment to Bill No. 260459
4 has been approved.

5 The Chair recognizes
6 Councilmember Phillips for a motion
7 on Bill No. 260459 as amended.

8 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:
9 Thank you, Madam Chair.

10 I move that Bill No.
11 260459 as amended be reported from
12 this committee with a favorable
13 recommendation and further move
14 that the rules of Council be
15 suspended to permit first reading
16 of this bill at the next session of
17 Council.

18 (Duly seconded.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

20 RICHARDSON: The Chair notes for
21 the record that Councilmember
22 seconds the motion. It has been
23 moved and properly seconded that
24 Bill No. 260459 as amended be

Committee on Law and Government

1 reported from this committee with a
2 favorable recommendation and
3 further move that the rules of
4 Council be suspended as to permit
5 first reading of this bill at the
6 next session of Council.

7 (Duly seconded.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

9 RICHARDSON: All those in favor of
10 the motion will indicate by stating
11 aye.

12 (Aye.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: Any opposed?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

17 RICHARDSON: The ayes have it and
18 the motion carries. Bill No.
19 260459 as amended will be reported
20 from this committee with a
21 favorable recommendation with a
22 request that the rules of Council
23 be suspended as to permit first
24 reading at the next session of

Committee on Law and Government

1 Council.

2 The Chair now recognizes
3 Councilmember Phillips for a motion
4 on Bill No. 260460.

5 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

6 Thank you, Madam Chair.

7 I move that Bill No.
8 260460 be reported from this
9 committee with a favorable
10 recommendation and further move
11 that the rules of Council be
12 suspended to permit first reading
13 of this bill at the next session of
14 Council.

15 (Duly seconded.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

17 RICHARDSON: The Chair notes for
18 the record that Councilmember Bass
19 seconds the motion. It has been
20 moved and properly seconded that
21 Bill No. 260460 be reported from
22 this committee with a favorable
23 recommendation and further move
24 that the rules of Council be

Committee on Law and Government

1 suspended as to permit first
2 reading at the next session of
3 Council.

4 All those in favor of
5 the motion will indicate by stating
6 aye.

7 (Aye.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

9 RICHARDSON: Any opposed?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

12 RICHARDSON: The ayes have it and
13 the motion carries. Bill No.
14 260460 will be reported from this
15 committee with a favorable
16 recommendation with a request that
17 the rules of Council be suspended
18 as to permit first reading at the
19 next session of Council.

20 There being no further
21 bills or resolutions on the agenda,
22 this concludes the business before
23 the Committee on Law and Government
24 today. We thank you very much for

Committee on Law and Government

1 your attendance and also for your
2 participation.

3 - - -

4 (Committee on Law and
5 Government concluded at 12:30 p.m.)

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Committee on Law and Government

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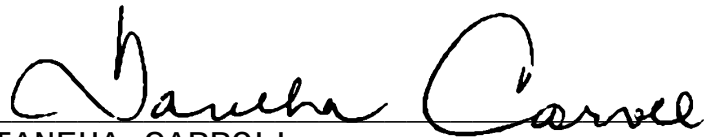
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I, hereby certify that the proceedings
and evidence noted are contained fully and
accurately in the stenographic notes taken
by me in the foregoing matter, and that
this is a correct transcript of the same.



TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of this
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unless under the direct control and/or
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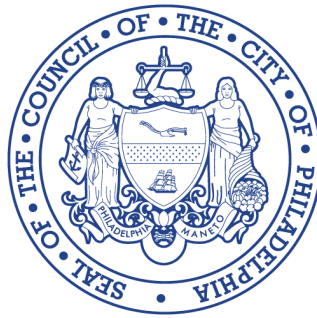
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City of Philadelphia

*City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107*



Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, May 27, 2026

10:00 AM

Room 400, City Hall

Committee on Law and Government

The Committee on Law and Government of the Council of the City of Philadelphia will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, May 27, 2026, at 10:00 AM, in Room 400, City Hall, to hear testimony on the following items:

260076

An Ordinance Providing for the submission to the qualified electors of the City of Philadelphia of the proposal set forth in a Resolution approved by Council proposing an amendment to the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter relating to the creation of the Philadelphia Child Welfare Commission; and authorizing and directing the appropriate officers to publish notice and to make arrangements for the special election.

Attachments: [Bill No. 26007600](#)

260264

An Ordinance Providing for the submission to the qualified electors of the City of Philadelphia of the proposal set forth in a Resolution approved by Council proposing an amendment to the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter to provide for the creation of a Creative Philadelphia, to provide for the powers and duties of such office, and to otherwise provide for incorporation of the office into the City government; and authorizing the appropriate officers to publish notice and to make arrangements for the special election; all under certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: [Bill No. 26026400](#)

260457

An Ordinance Providing for the submission to the qualified electors of the City of Philadelphia of an amendment to The Philadelphia Home Rule Charter to change City procurement procedures and requirements; fixing the date of a special election for such purpose; prescribing the form of ballot questions to be voted on; and authorizing the appropriate officers to publish notice and to make arrangements for the special election.

Attachments: [Bill No. 26045700](#)

260458

An Ordinance Amending Section 17-103 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “Bonds Relating to Procurement Contracts” to amend requirements related to performance and payment bonds on certain contracts and providing for disclosure and monitoring of the bond acquisition cost, all under certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: [Bill No. 26045800](#)

260459

An Ordinance Amending Section 17-109 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “Local Bidding Preferences,” by establishing a new category of bid preference for businesses that are both local and small, and amending definitions, certification, goal setting and reporting requirements, all under certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: [Bill No. 26045900](#)

[260460](#) An Ordinance Amending Chapter 17-1400 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled “Non-Competitively Bid Contracts; Financial Assistance,” by updating references and exclusions, all under certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: [Bill No. 26046000](#)

[260094](#) Resolution Proposing an amendment to the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter providing for the creation of the Philadelphia Child Welfare Commission; and providing for the submission of the proposed amendment to the electors of Philadelphia.

Attachments: [Resolution No. 26009400](#)

[260467](#) Resolution Proposing an amendment to The Philadelphia Home Rule Charter to change City procurement procedures and requirements; and providing for the submission of the amendment to the electors of Philadelphia.

Attachments: [Resolution No. 26046700](#)

[260270](#) Resolution Proposing an amendment to the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter to provide for the creation of Creative Philadelphia and providing for the submission of the amendment to the electors of Philadelphia.

Attachments: [Resolution No. 26027000](#)

Immediately following the public hearing, a meeting of the Committee on Law and Government, open to the public, will be held to consider the action to be taken on the above listed items. Copies of the foregoing items are available in the Office of the Chief Clerk of the Council, Room 402, City Hall.